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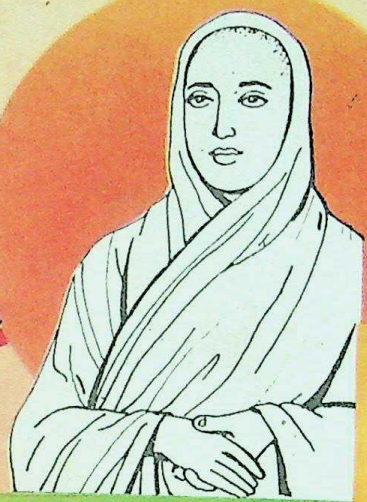

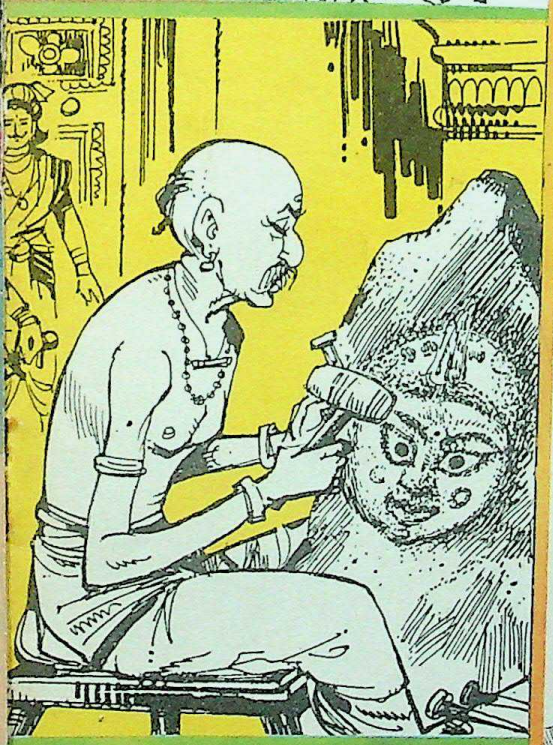

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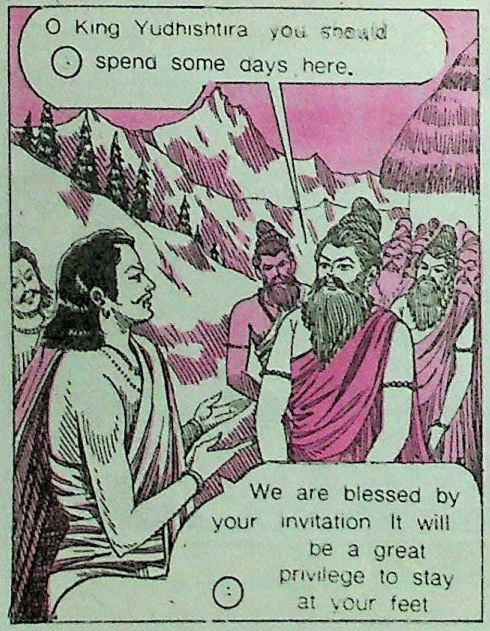
BHIMA MEETS HANUMAN

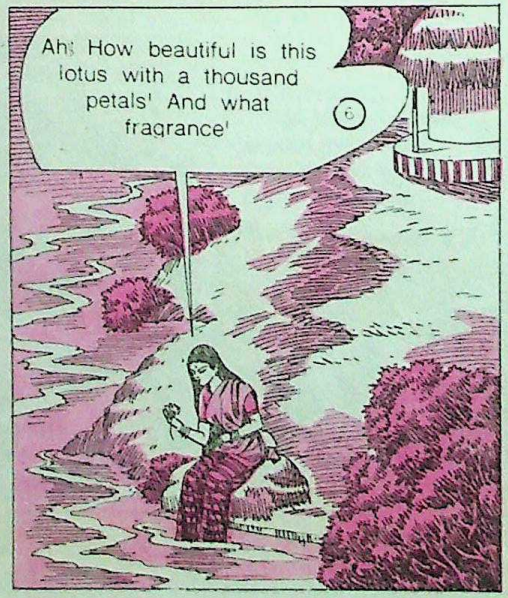
Tamil Original: R.V
English: Raghaveshananda
Art: Sankar

Narayanashrama is a holy place in the Himalayas, where many sages spent their lives in meditation. The Pandavas went to this place during their exile. (1)

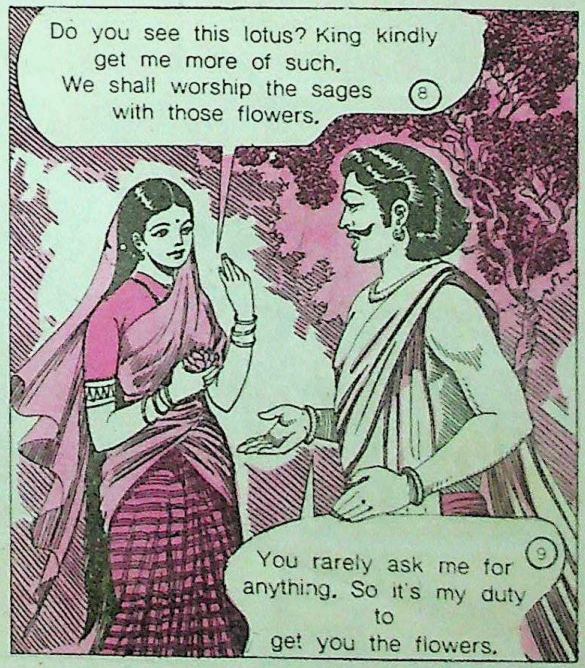
The sages were happy to receive them. (2)



The Pandavas stayed there for some days. One day Draupadi saw a lotus floating in the river near their cottage. (5)



Draupadi approached Bhima (7)



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Bhima went in search of this particular lotus. (10)

Is this Gandhamadana mountain? How many varieties of flowers! I have never seen such a valley full of flowers. (11)

Even though the fragrance of the different flowers mesmerised him, he never forgot his mission. (12)

That particular flower is not to be seen. How can I disappoint (13) Draupadi?

On the way, in a banana grove Lord Hanuman was sitting in ecstasy, repeating the Lord's name. He was Bhima's elder brother (14)

(15) Ram! Ram! Ram!

(16) The wild animals ran hither and thither hearing the footsteps of Bhima.

Being disturbed by the sound, Hanuman slowly opened his eyes. (17)

My younger brother is coming. Let me tease him a bit. (18)

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Hanuman spread out his tail and lashed it on the ground. It made a terrifying sound, which attracted the attention of Bhima. (19)

Who are you? And why have you come here? (20)

Who are you? I am a son of Kunti. People call me Bhima. (21)

O Bhima, I am too old to move. Cross me and go. (22)

You look like a respectable person. If you were an ordinary monkey, I would have jumped over you like Hanuman who crossed the sea. Move aside. Otherwise, I shall have to deal roughly with you. (23)

All right! Having come, eat some fruits and depart. I am an old monkey. This is my place You can't go any further. Don't disturb me. Please turn back. (24)

O monkey! (25) I am not afraid of anybody. Give me way. Otherwise you will be punished.

Hanuman pretending to be afraid... (26)

O mighty one! I am unable to move. You may push my tail aside and proceed. (27)

I shall throw you by your tail (28)

Bhima carelessly pushed the tail with his leg. It did not move then he tried with both his hands. But in vain. He put his whole strength and tried to push the tail. He could not push it even an inch. At last... (29)

Respected sir! You must be a great person. Please reveal your identity (30)

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Hanuman looking at the humiliated Bhima... 31

O Bhima! I am your brother Hanuman. The pond is very near. Go and collect the flowers 32

Brother! Forgive me and bless me. Bless me by showing your Vishwarupa. 33

After much pleading, Hanuman revealed his cosmic form which extended beyond the sky. Bhima bowed in great reverence to Hanuman, who blessed him. 34

O Lord! I am really blessed! 35

Bhima! We should show respect to old people. Be sincere in your duties. May the Lord help you in all your efforts..... There is Kubera's pond. The flowers which you are searching for are there in abundance. 36

Bhima collected the flowers and returned to Draupadi. 37

O Panchali! Today it was my good fortune to meet my brother Hanuman. I got these flowers by his grace. 38

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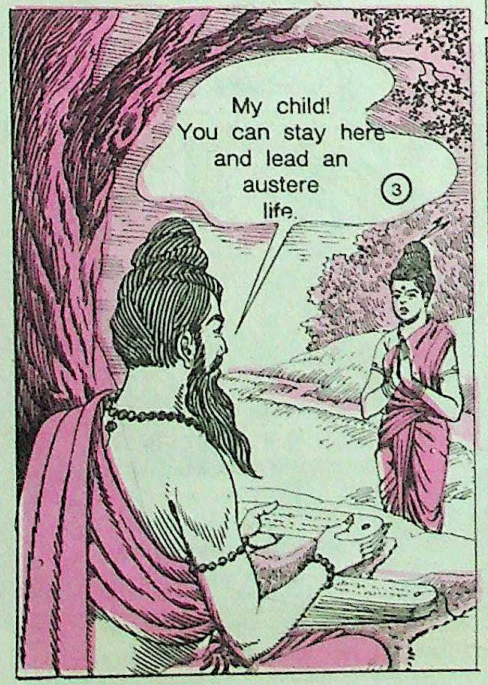
SHABARI

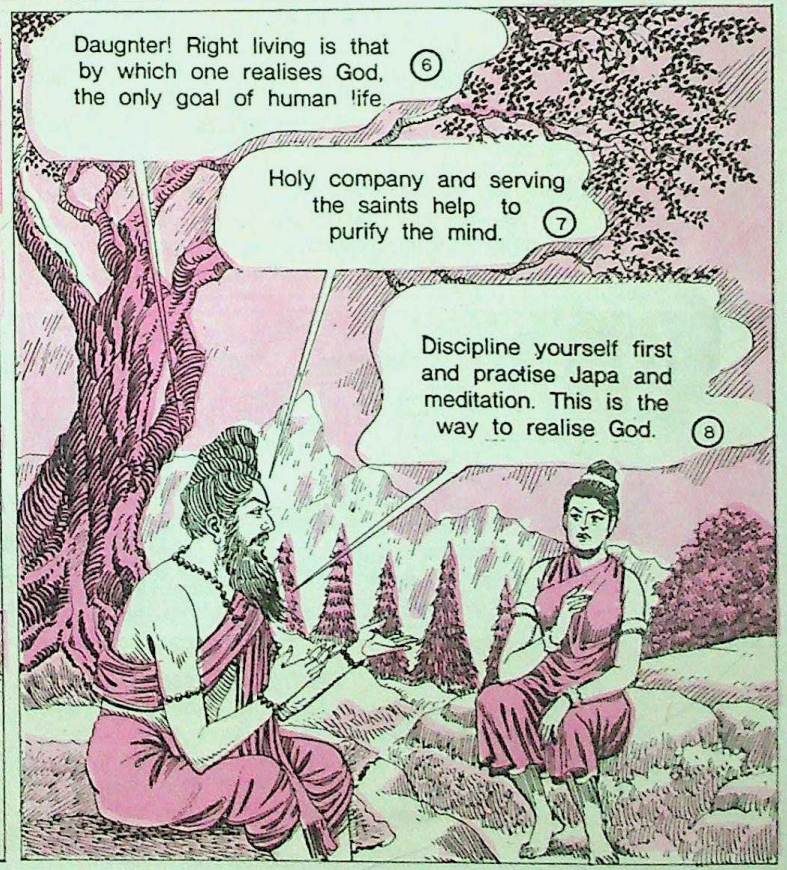
Tamil Original: Vivekanandadasan
English: Raghaveshananda
Art: Sankar

Shabari was born to a Kshatriya father and a hunter mother. Since, she belonged to the Shabara tribe, she was named Shabari. When her marriage was fixed, her parents collected thousands of animals for the feast. But Shabari did not like the killing of innocent animals. So, she decided to remain unmarried and spend her life thinking of the Lord. She left her parents and went away. (1)

Sage Matanga gave shelter to her in his Ashram. (2)



The sage took greater care of her than even her parents. (4)



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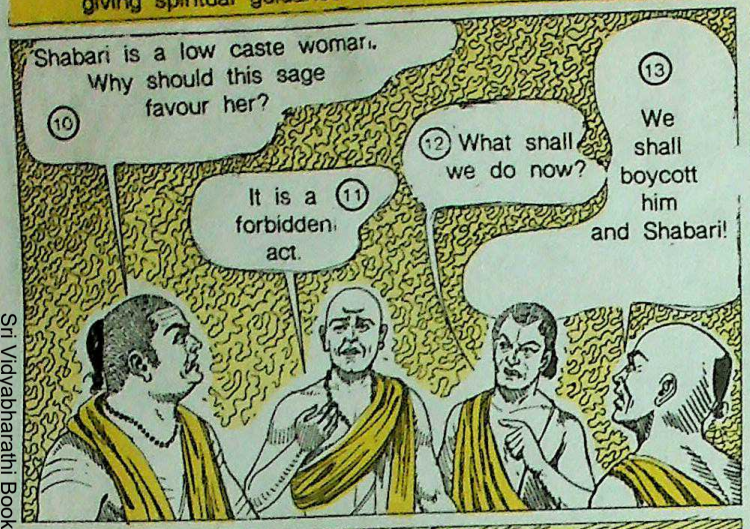
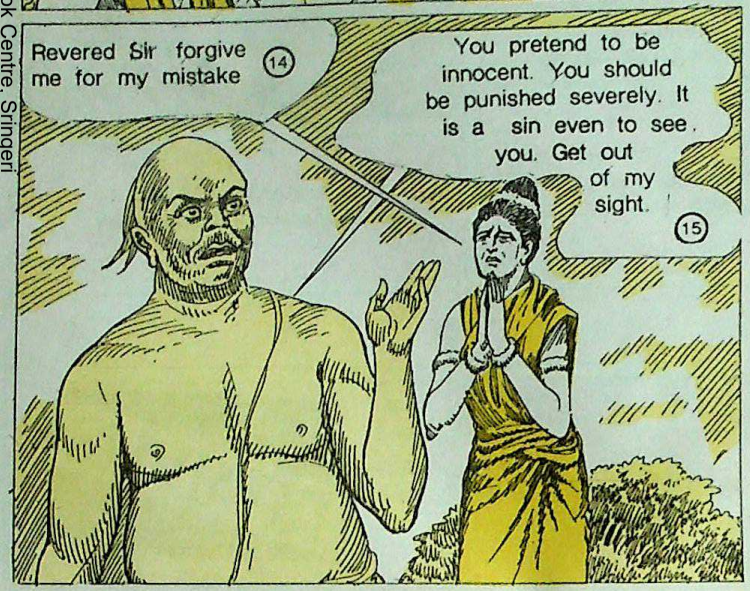
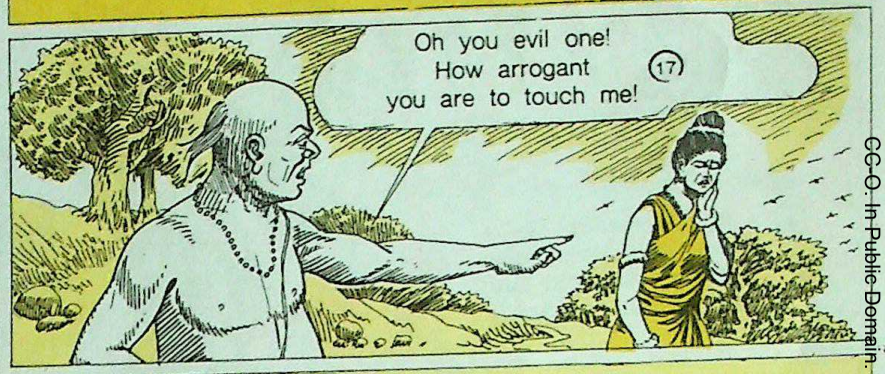
The local Brahmins did not approve of Matanga giving spiritual guidance to a low caste woman. (9)

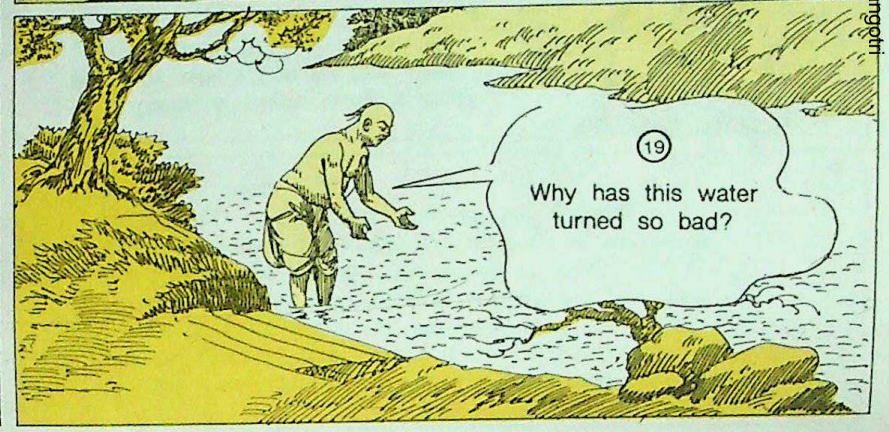




All the Brahmins boycotted Matanga. One day, Shabari was going to the river for bath. A Brahmin was coming in the opposite directior after bath, when by chance her wearing cloth touched him. The Brahmin became furious. He rebuked her severely. (16)



The Brahmin went again to the river to take bath. As soon as he got down into the water, the water turned to red colour and worms began to crawl in it. That was due to the insults he hurled at Shabari. (18)



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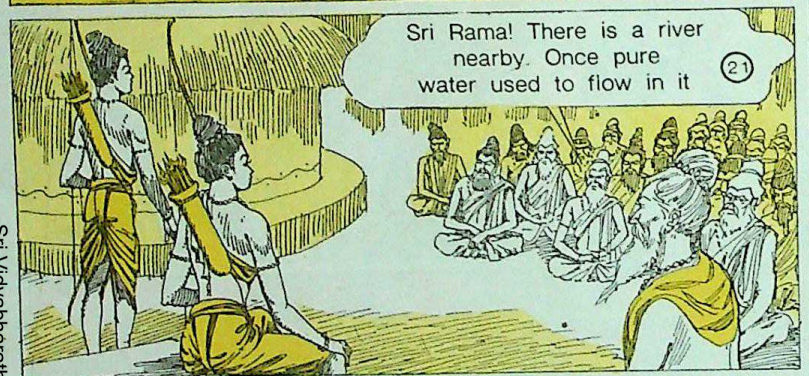
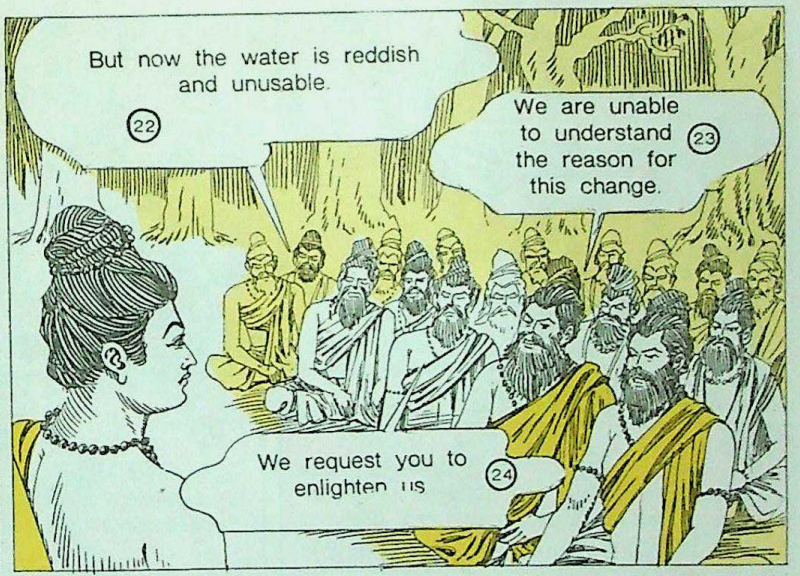
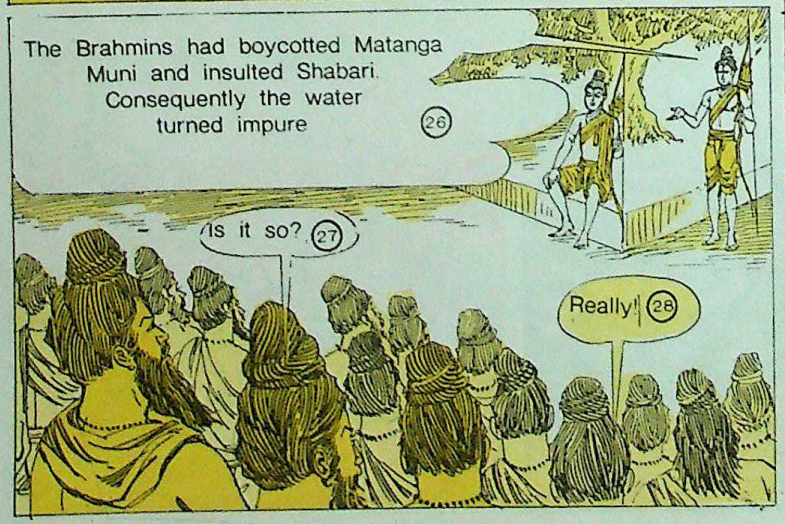
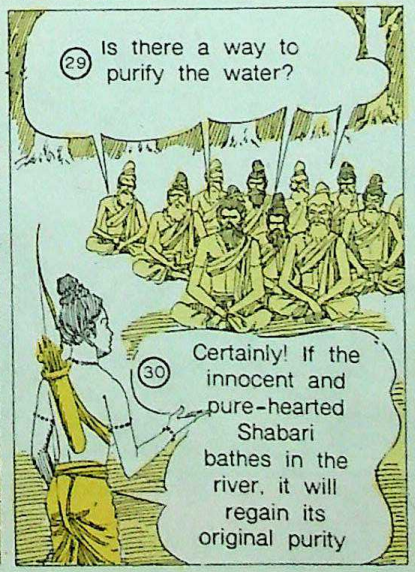
After many years, Sri Rama during his exile came to the forest, known as Dandakaranya and visited Shabari's hut first. He partook with the greatest relish the fruits offered by her in ecstatic devotion.
All the sages in the forest came to meet Sri Rama. They asked..... (20)

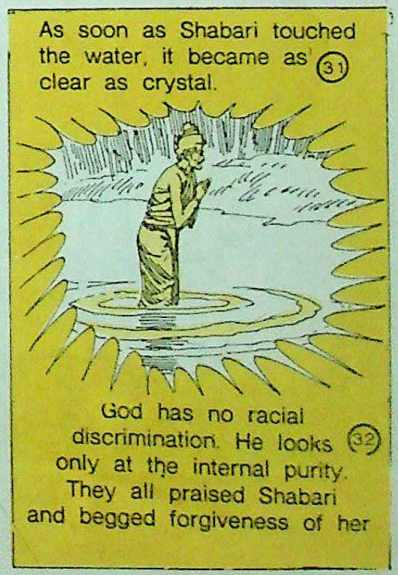




Lakshmana explained. (25)







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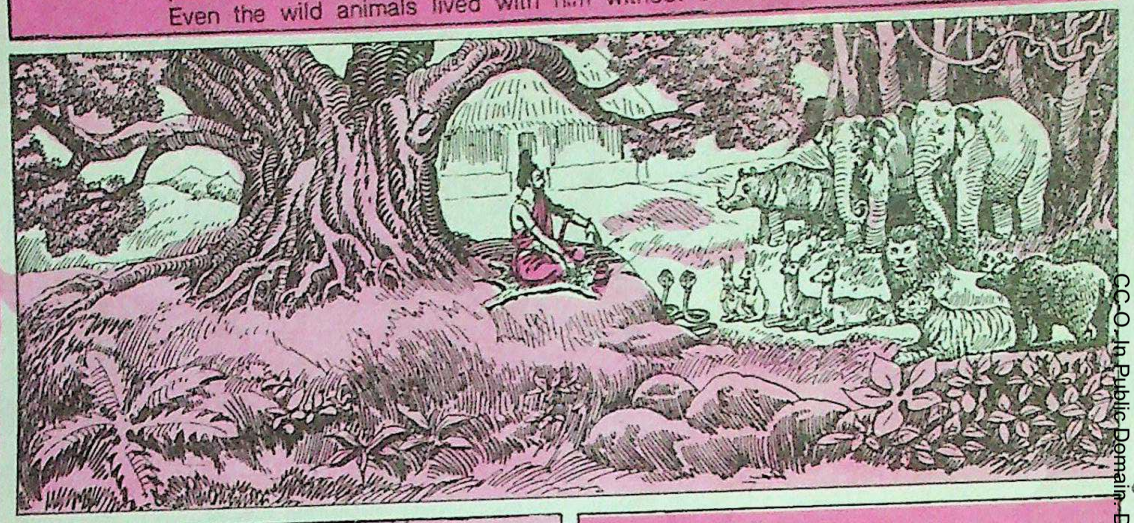
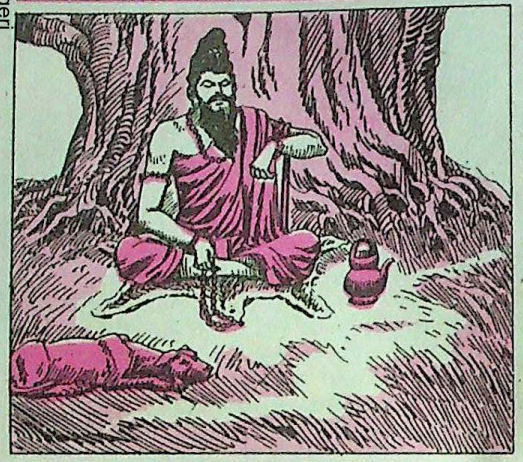
THE UNGRATEFUL DOG

Tamil Original: Paramahamsadas
English: Raghaveshananda
Art: Sankar

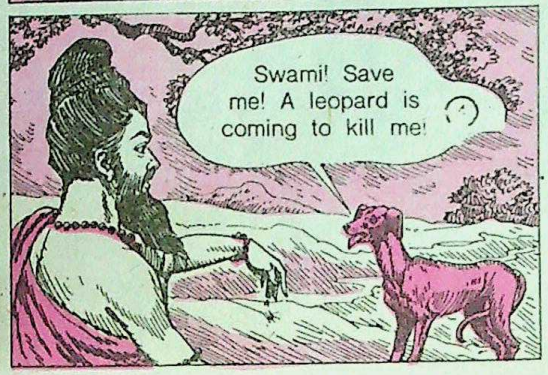
Sage Agniprabha lived in a small hut in a forest, radiating peace all around.
Even the wild animals lived with him without enmity. (1)



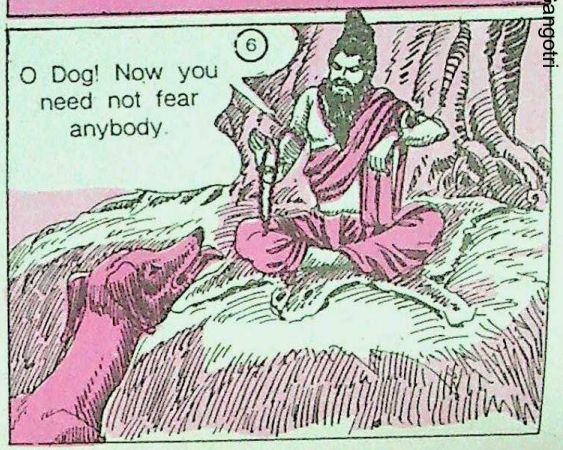
A dog was one of them. (2)



One day, the dog went elsewhere into the forest, when a leopard chased it.
The dog ran back for life and at last reached the Ashram. (3)



The Sage felt pity for the dog.
To save the dog he sprinkled water on it, uttering a mantra. The dog was turned into a leopard. (5)



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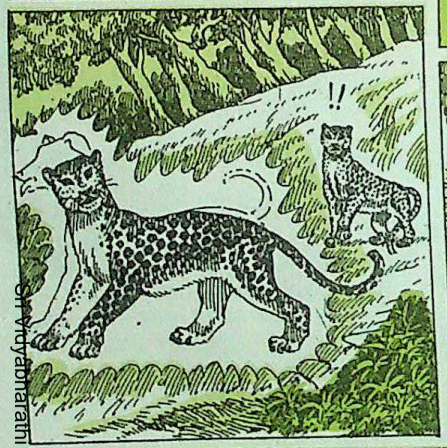
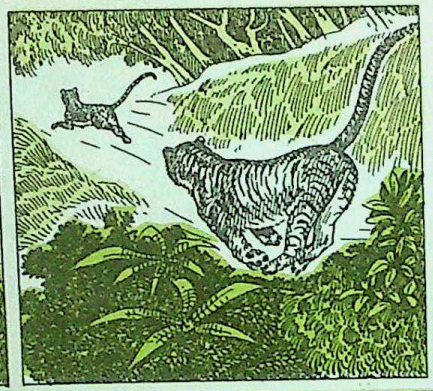
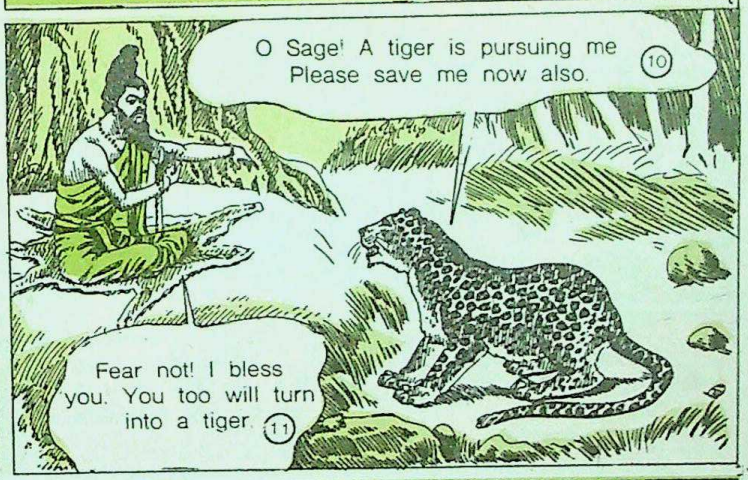
Seeing the dog turned into a leopard, the other leopard was puzzled and ran away. (7)



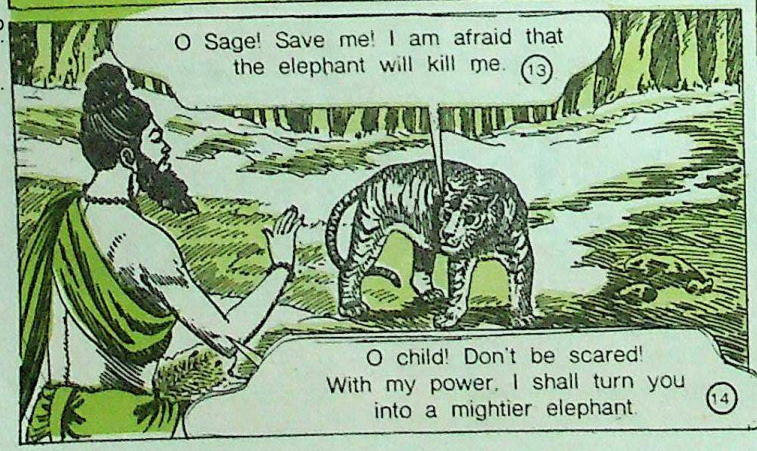
For some days, this new leopard moved about fearlessly in the forest. One day a tiger began to chase this leopard. (8)



Again, the leopard ran to the Sage and took shelter at his feet. The Sage asked him what the matter was. (9)



Now the dog-tiger was roaming about happily. Suddenly, one day looking at an elephant it got frightened and ran back to the sage. (12)



The Sage converted the dog-tiger into an elephant. But one day, it was attacked by a lion. So, it requested the Sage to save him. The generous Sage immediately turned the elephant into a ferocious lion. (15)

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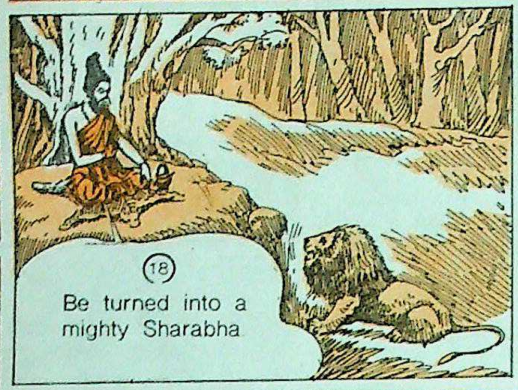
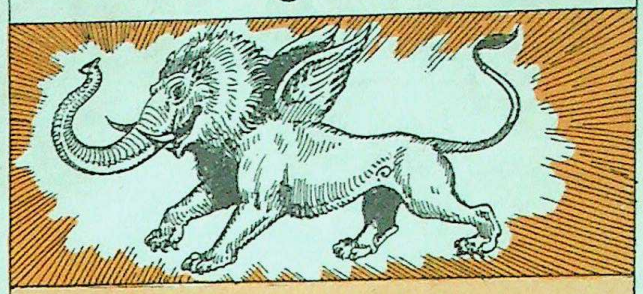
Now, this mighty lion roamed in the forest freely at will. (16)

One day, a bloodthirsty Sharabha attacked this lion-dog. Again, the frightened lion ran to the Sage and begged to be saved. (17)



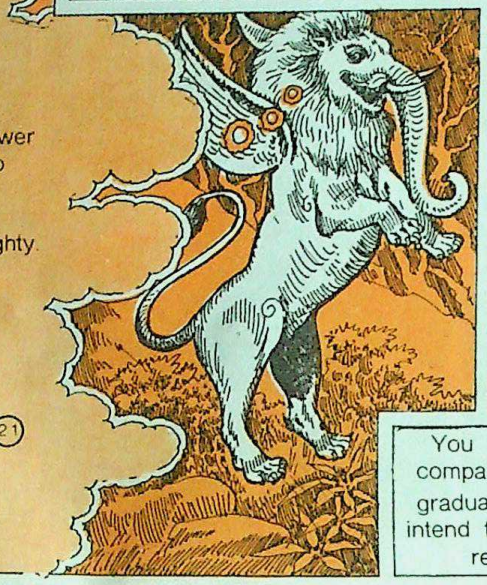
(18)
Be turned into a mighty Sharabha

The other Sharabha, ran out of fear, into the forest. (19)



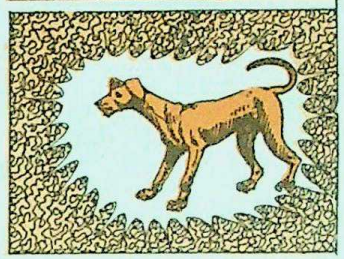
This dog turned Sharabha became proud An evil thought entered its mind. (20)

I am the king of the forest. Now every creature in this forest respects me out of fear. But this Sage has more power in him. If some other animal also takes refuge in him, he may turn that animal also into my equal or into one even more mighty. Then there will be rivalry between us. Who knows, the other may even kill me. So, to save myself, it is better that I kill this Sage. (21)



With this evil thought in mind, it went near the Sage. The Sage understood its mind (22)

No sooner he uttered these words, than the Sharabha was transformed into a dog. (24)



You were a dog by birth. Out of compassion I made you a Sharabha gradually. But being ungrateful, you intend to kill me. So, it is better you remain only as the old dog. (23)

This story appears in the Shanti Parva of the Mahabharata. (25)

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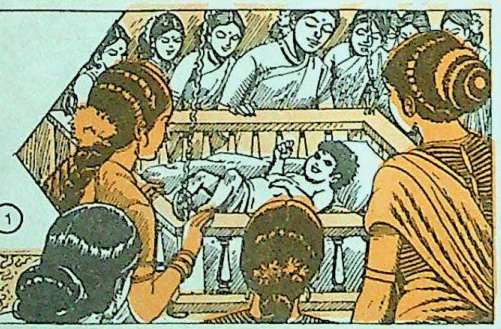
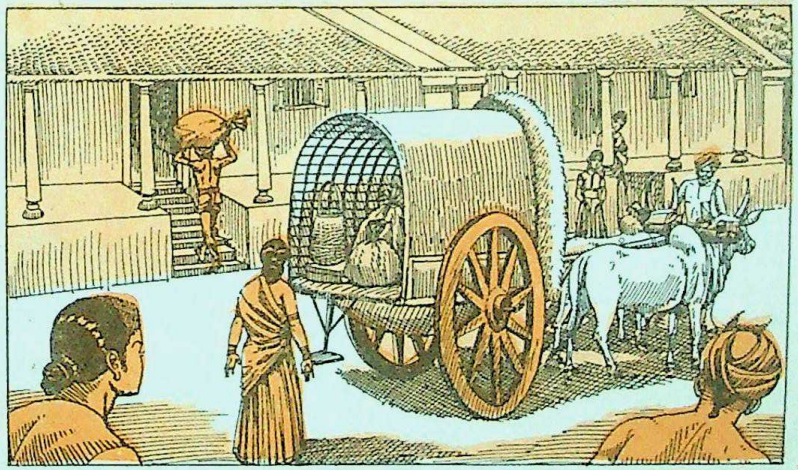
SAINT THYAGARAJA

Tamil Original: Pradip
English: Raghaveshananda
Art: Sankar

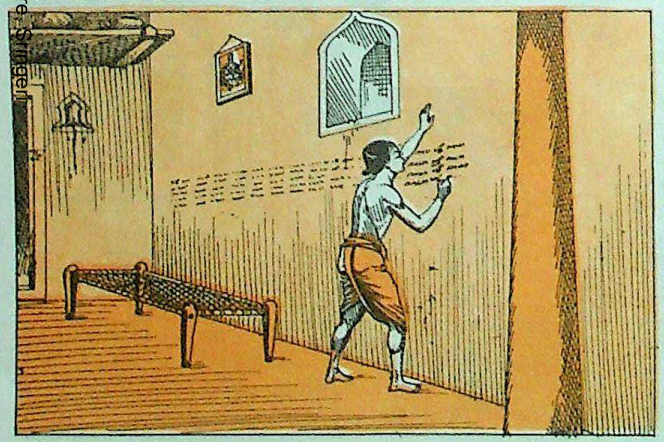
Thyagaraja took birth at Thiruvarur when Sarabhoja was the local king. He was named after the deity of Thiruvarur. (1)



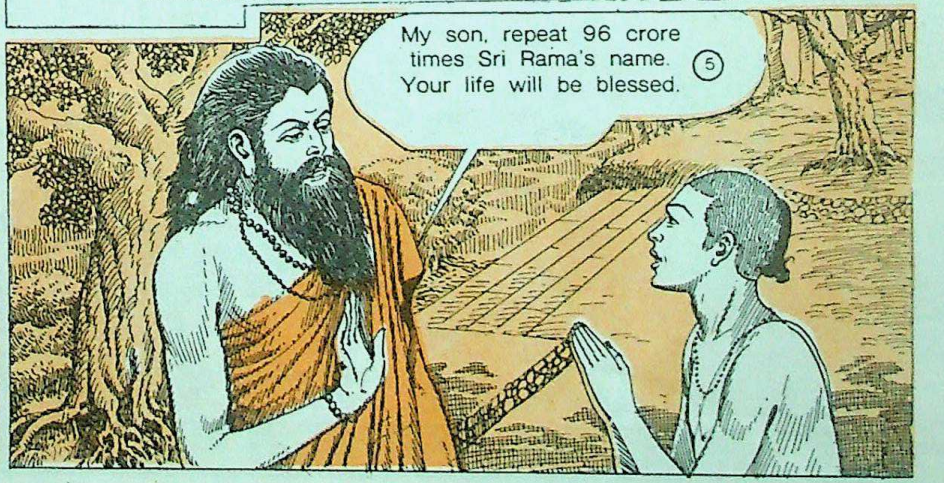
He lost his parents while still young and on account of poverty, he had to move to Thiruvaiyaru. (2)



He had deep devotion to Sri Rama. So he used to write Ramnam on the walls of his house. (3)



Seeing his great devotion to Sri Rama, a sannyasi by name Ramakrishna initiated him in the Rama Mantra. (4)



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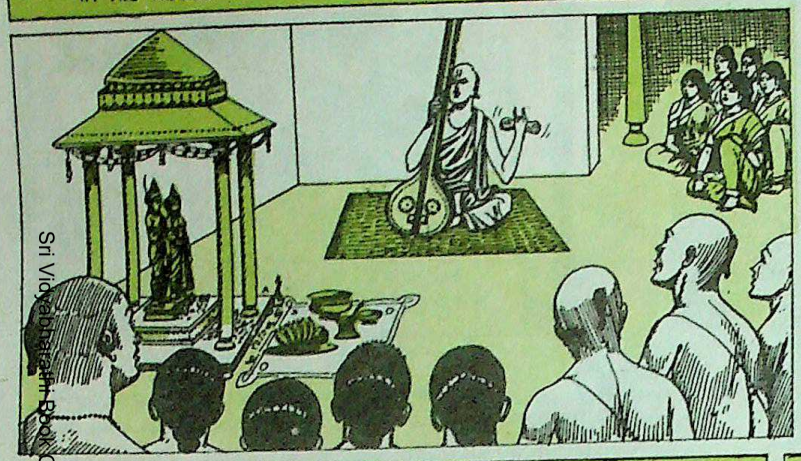
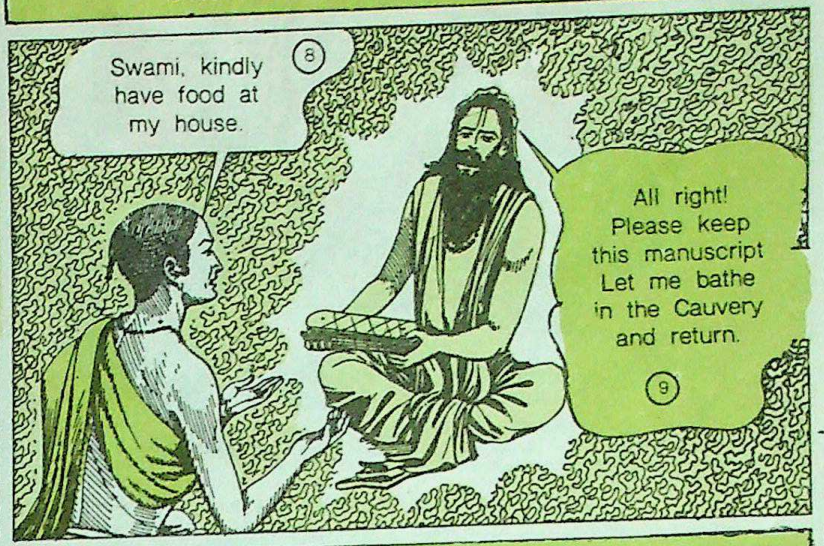
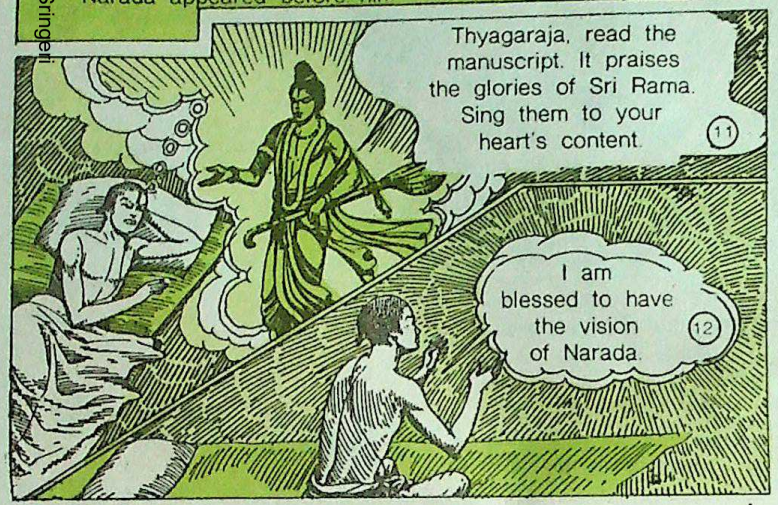
Thyagaraja also used to compose spontaneously songs in praise of Sri Rama and sing them in front of the images of Sri Rama and Sita in his house. (6)



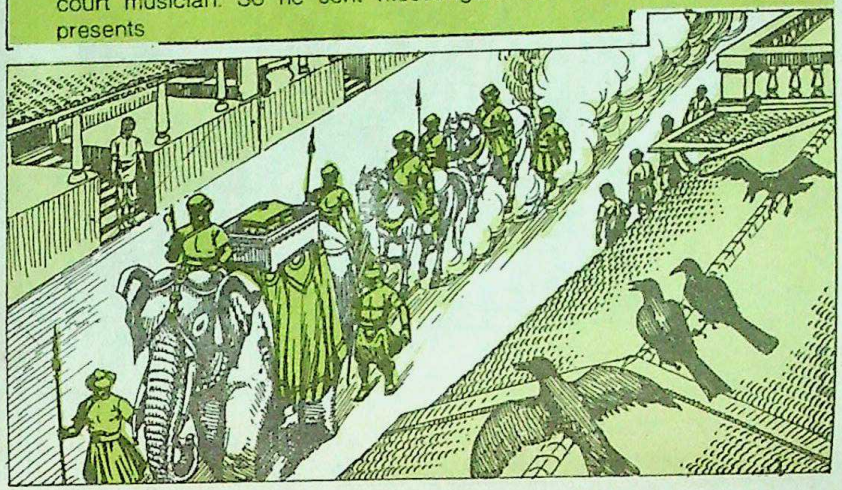
Once a Sadhu visited him (7)



The Sadhu did not return for long. Thyagaraja slept for a while. In the dream Sage Narada appeared before him (10)



Thyagaraja firmly believed that God can be seen through devotional music. His name spread every where. King Sarabhoja decided to make him the court musician. So he sent messengers with several presents (13)



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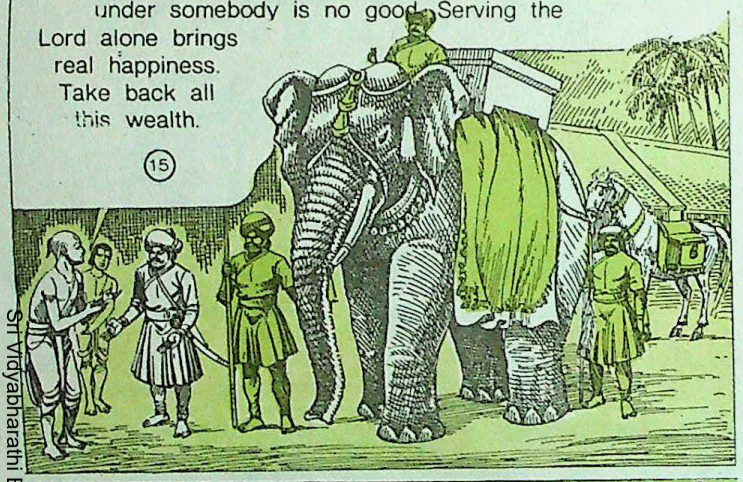
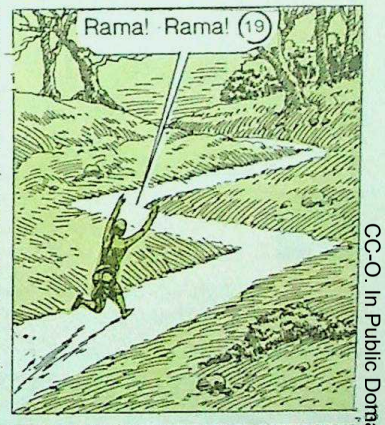
Thyagaraja said to the king's messengers.... (14)

Wealth does not bring happiness to man. To work under somebody is no good. Serving the Lord alone brings real happiness. Take back all this wealth. (15)

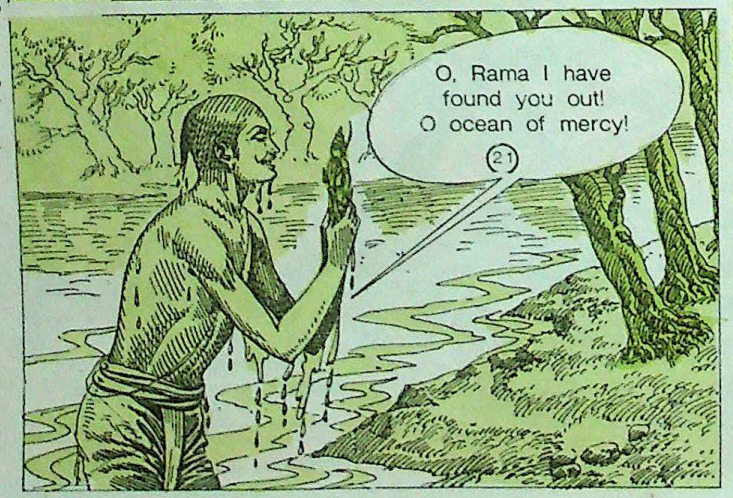


His brothers were angry with him for his attitude. They stealthily flung the image of Sri Rama into the Cauvery. Missing the presence of the Lord, Thyagaraja, sad at heart, sat in meditation. (16)

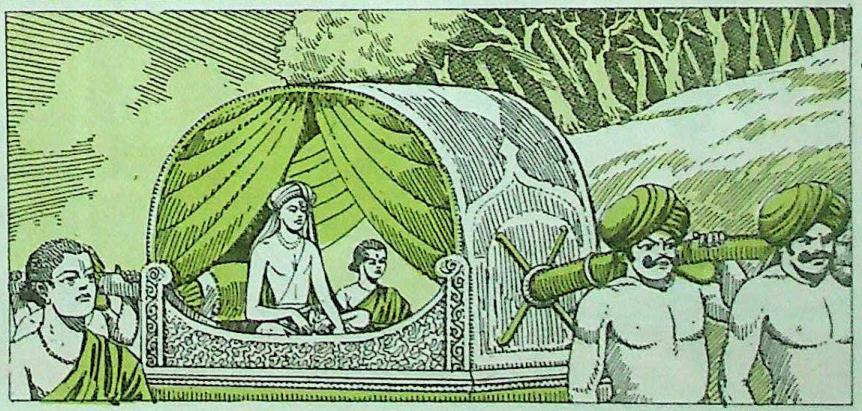
The Lord appeared before him in a dream and pointed towards the Cauvery where the image had been thrown. (18)



Thyagaraja ran to the river and took out the image. (20)



Once he went on a pilgrimage. When he reached Kovur, a rich man offered him gold coins. Since, Thyagaraja refused them, he kept them in the palanquin without his knowledge. (22)



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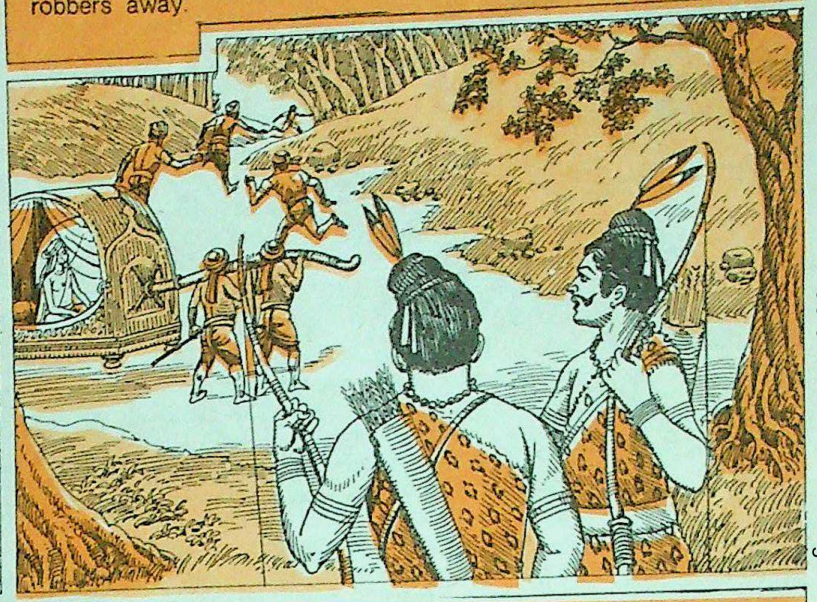
On the way, in a forest area, some robbers stopped them. (23)

Hand over all the money you have. (24)

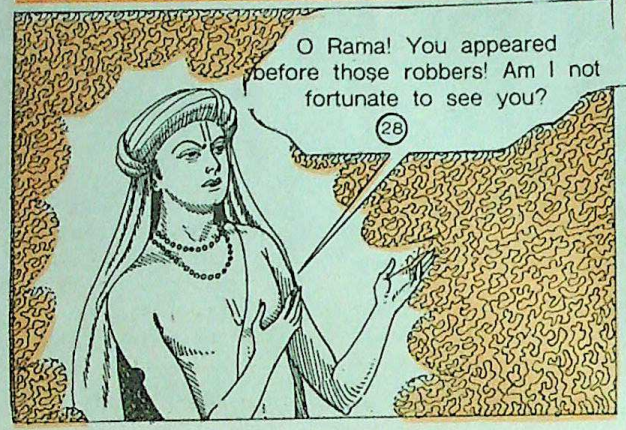
O Lord! If there is any money with me, you only should protect it. (25)

Just then, two hunters appeared and chased the robbers away. (26)



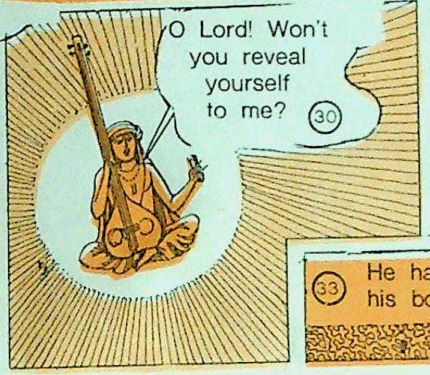
As soon as the robbers had fled in fear, the hunters too disappeared. (27)

O Rama! You appeared before those robbers! Am I not fortunate to see you? (28)



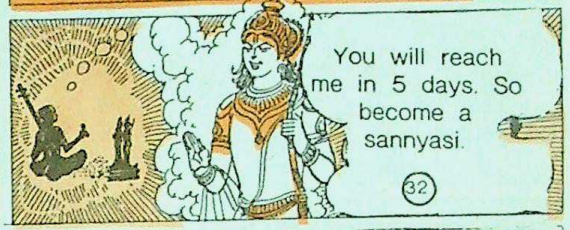
He sang the glory of the Lord in agony. (29)

O Lord! Won't you reveal yourself to me? (30)



He always felt that Rama lived in the image. He longed to see Sri Rama in person. One day..... (31)

You will reach me in 5 days. So become a sannyasi. (32)



(33) He had the blessed vision of Sri Rama and left his body in 1847.

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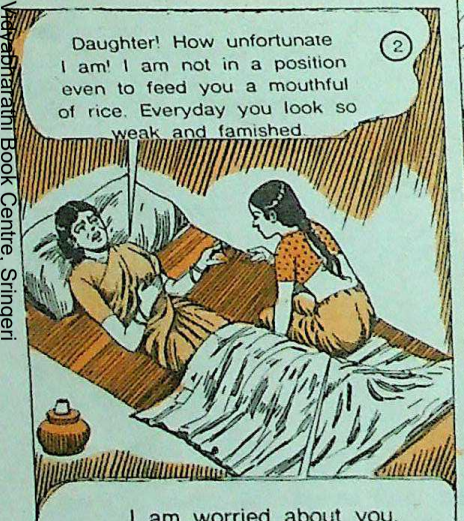
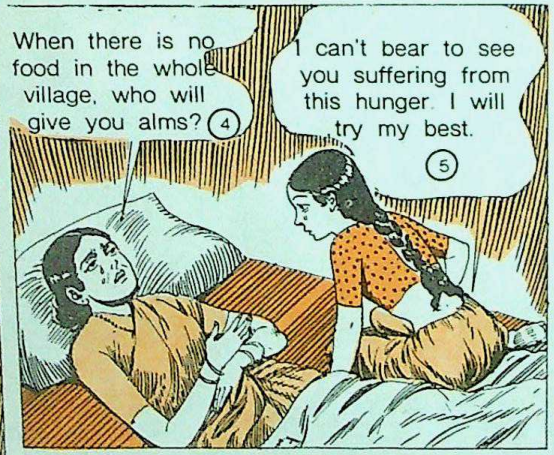
CONCERN FOR OTHERS

Tamil Original: Kamalatmananda
English: Raghaveshananda
Art: Sankar

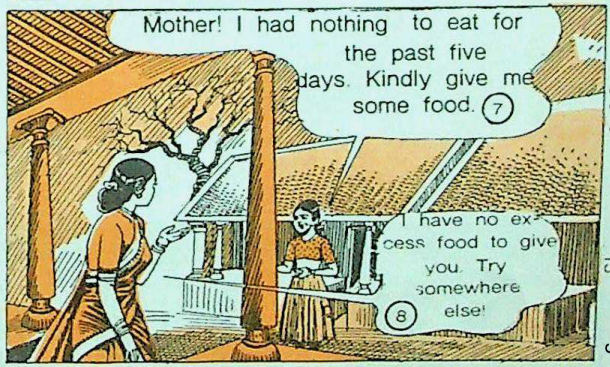
Nagapura was a place of famine and poverty. There lived a widow Kamala with her daughter Kannamma. They had no means of livelihood. (1)





After begging at several houses fruitlessly, she stood under a tree completely tired. There at a distance she saw an old woman baking bread (9)

Kannamma went to a house and begged for alms. (6)



The old lady looked at Kannamma. She pitied her. (11)

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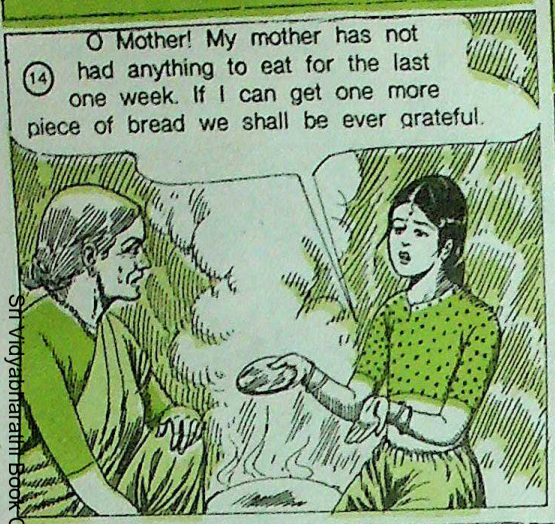
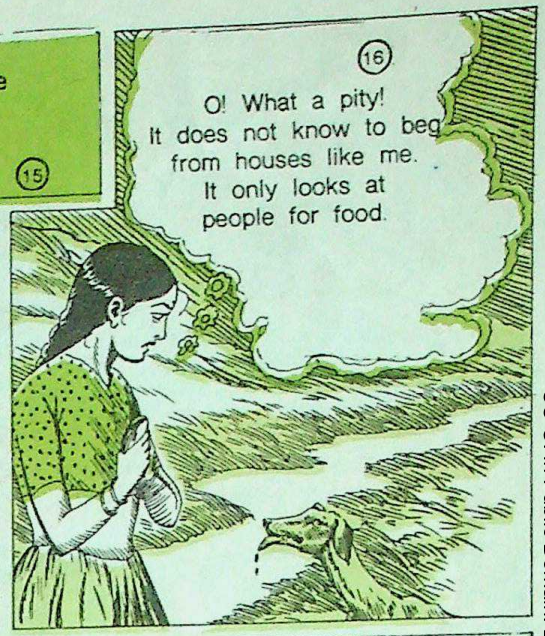
Kannamma accepted it gratefully and said again. (13)

(14) O Mother! My mother has not had anything to eat for the last one week. If I can get one more piece of bread we shall be ever grateful.



The old lady offered her one more piece of bread. Kannamma was returning happily. On the way she saw a dog looking for food. (15)

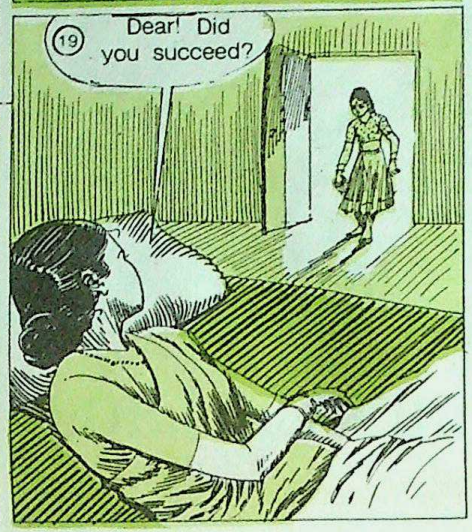
(16) O! What a pity! It does not know to beg from houses like me. It only looks at people for food.



She lovingly offered one piece of bread to the dog out of compassion. The dog ate it and went away happily. (17)

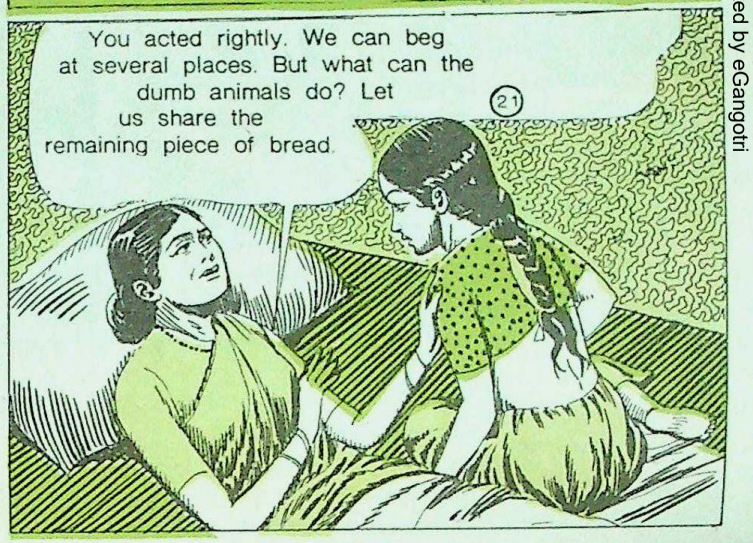
Kannamma reached home. (18)

(19) Dear! Did you succeed?



Kannamma narrated everything (20)

You acted rightly. We can beg at several places. But what can the dumb animals do? Let us share the remaining piece of bread. (21)



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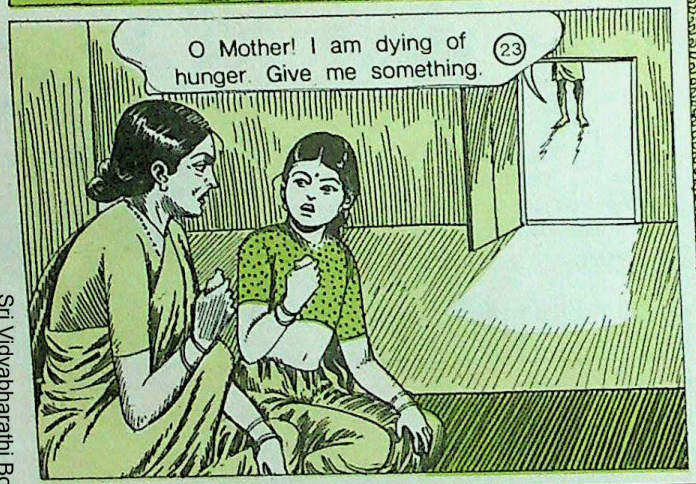
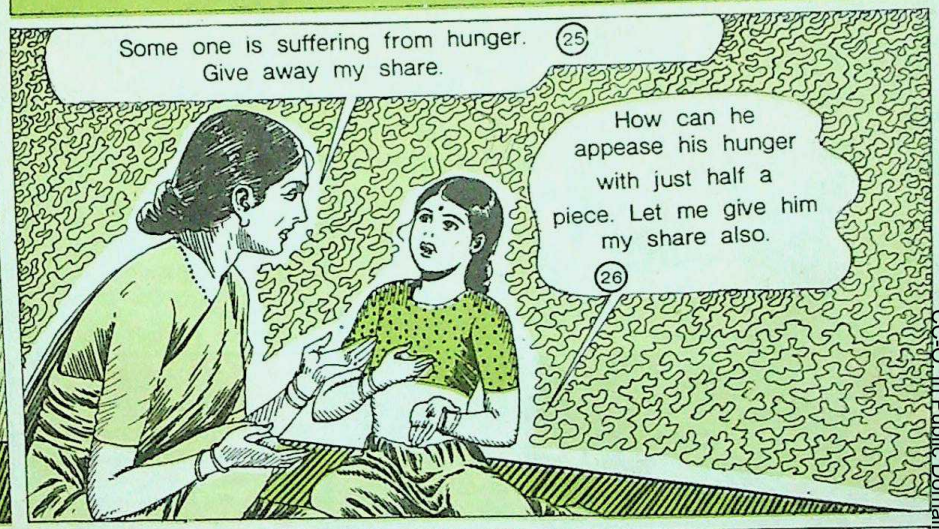
When they were about to eat it, they heard a voice at the door. (22)



They looked at each other. (24)



Kannamma gave away both their shares of bread to the beggar. He ate it with satisfaction. (27)

Shortly after his departure they swooned out of extreme hunger. Then Kamala had a dream. God appeared before her and said.... (29)

O Kamala! Even though you and your daughter were in dire hunger, both of you gladly gave away whatever you had to the hungry dog and the famished beggar. I only appeared in these forms to test you both. Now I am pleased by your loving concern for others. May you get enough wealth and live happily! (30)

When Kamala opened her eyes, a miracle was waiting for her. By God's grace her hut had changed into a mansion filled with heaps of grain, cloths and garments. It looked like Kubera's palace. (31)

They fed the people of the village sumptuously. Their meritorious act brought rain to the village. The famine disappeared and there was abundance everywhere. (32)

This story illustrates the truth that God's grace flows abundantly to anyone who sacrifices his all in the service of his fellow beings. (33)

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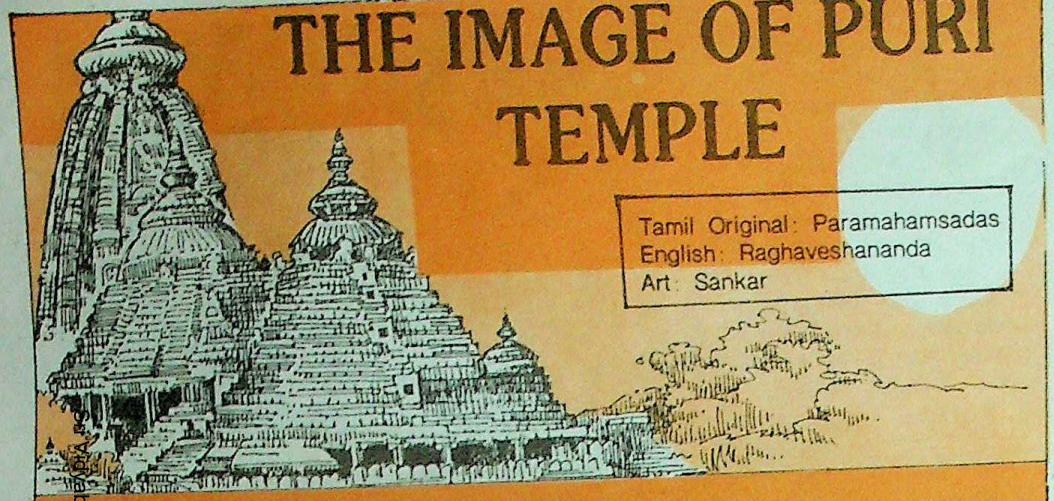
THE IMAGE OF PURI TEMPLE



Tamil Original: Paramahamsadas
English: Raghaveshananda
Art: Sankar

The king of Kalinga constructed a temple at Puri. But the image had to be prepared. He wanted a beautiful image to be installed. So he ordered the drum-beater to announce as follows. (1)

An announcement by the King of kings Kalingaraja. Ten thousand gold coins will be awarded to the sculptor who is willing to carve the image of Jagannath to the satisfaction of the king. But if the image is not up to the king's satisfaction the sculptor will be beheaded.' (2)

Who is the lucky one? (3)

None of the sculptors of Kalinga dared to come forward. (4)

Varaguna! Why should you not try? (5)

Sumitra! I don't want that money. I can't risk getting beheaded. (6)

After a long time, an old sculptor approached the king. (7)

O King! I am ready to prepare a beautiful image of the Lord but on one condition. (8)

What? (9)

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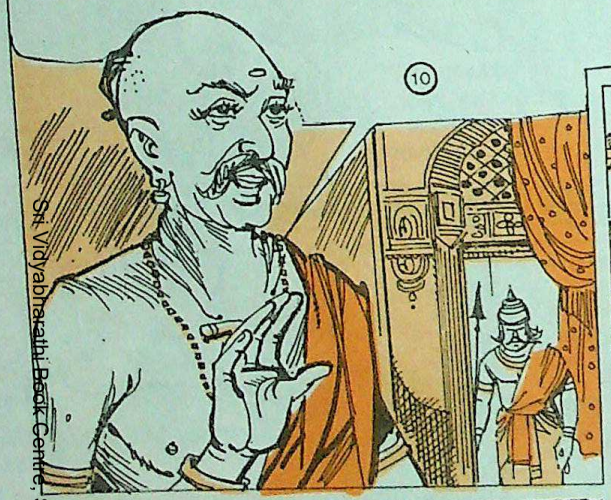
Courtesy: Vanabharathi Book Centre, Sringeri

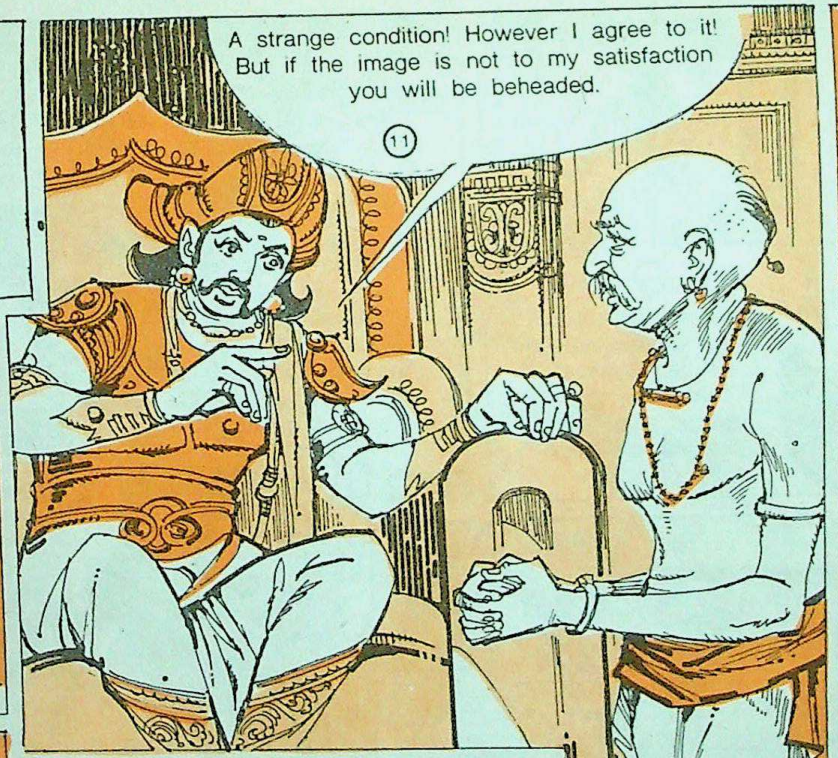
As you have made a condition, let me also make one! The image will be ready in thirty days. But during that time the temple will remain closed. Neither you nor anyone else should open the door on any pretext and disturb me.

(10)

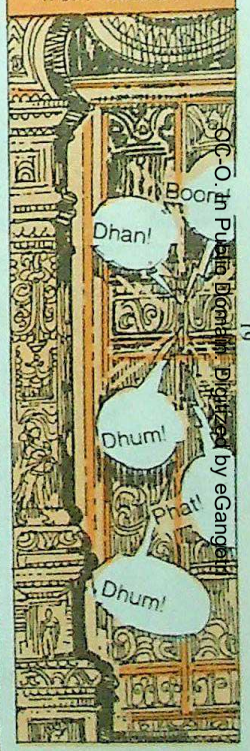


A strange condition! However I agree to it! But if the image is not to my satisfaction you will be beheaded.

(11)



The old man started the work closing the doors. The people (12) could hear the sound of the chisel from outside.



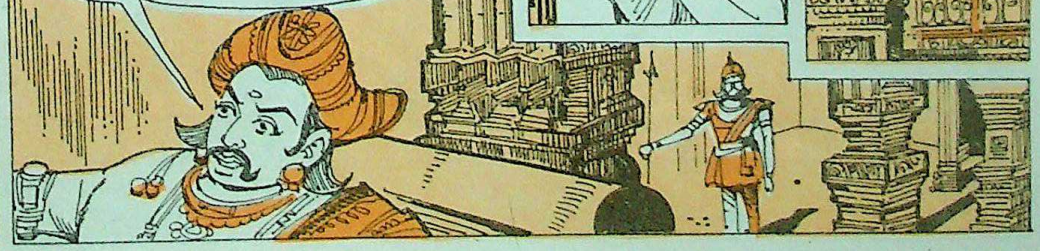
The king was informed. (13)

O King! Only the old man is inside. But the sounds are heard as if thousands are working inside. We doubt if he is carving the image or breaking the temple itself.

(14)

have committed myself to the condition that I shall not enter the temple for a month. Ten days only have passed since.

(15)



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Another ten days passed. Various nerve-shattering sounds continued to come from inside the temple causing great shock to one and all. So the minister broached the matter again to the king. (16)

O King! I doubt if the old man is working on an image. Probably one of our enemies has come in the guise of an architect to break down our temple. (17)

Just wait! We shall enter the temple when this strange sculptor completes one month's work. (18)

That night the king too heard a terrific noise. (19)

Does he work in the night also? (20)

He summoned the minister (21)

Minister! Just find out if there is light inside the temple (22)

King! I have already verified it. There is no light. But the sound is terrible. In the morning, we should break open the doors. (23)

Only twenty one days have passed. But I too am scared. Let us break open the doors at daybreak. (24)

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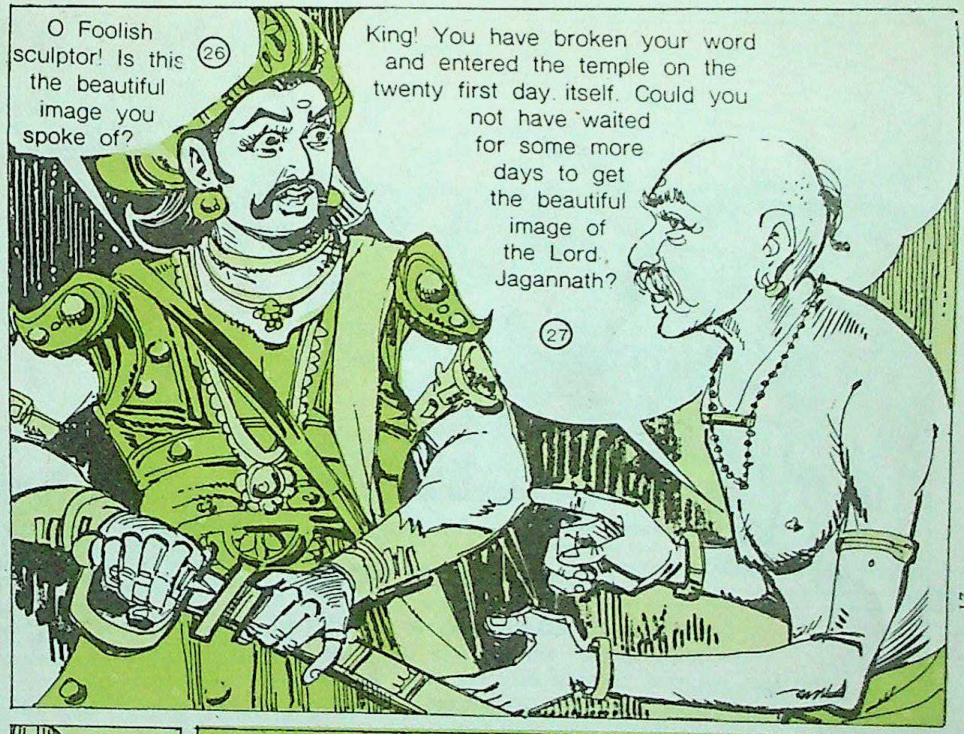
Next morning, the door-keepers broke open the door. The king and his retinue entered the temple. The temple was not damaged as they thought. But the old man was carving an ugly image. (25)

O Foolish sculptor! Is this the beautiful image you spoke of? (26)

King! You have broken your word and entered the temple on the twenty first day itself. Could you not have waited for some more days to get the beautiful image of the Lord Jagannath? (27)

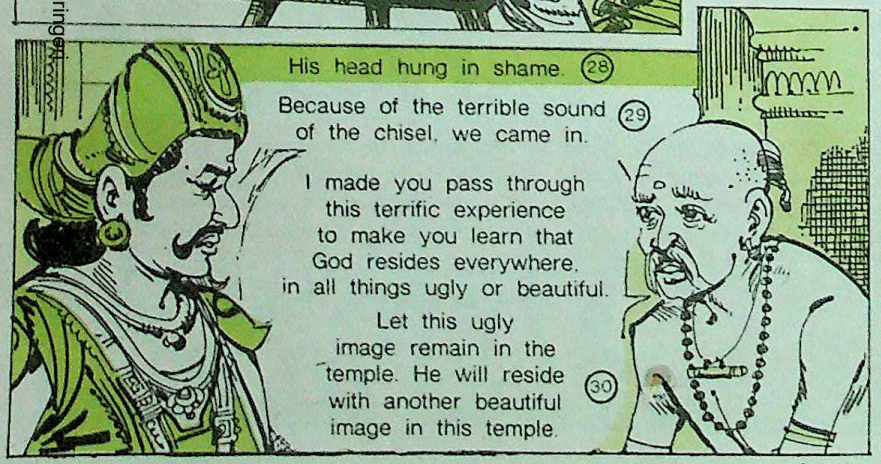


His head hung in shame. (28)

Because of the terrible sound of the chisel, we came in. (29)

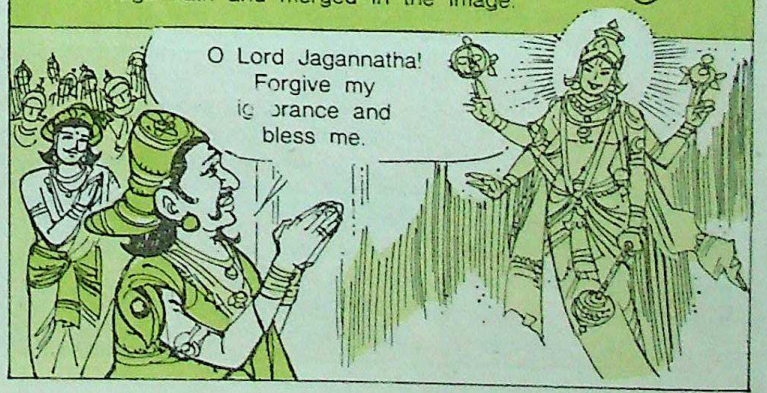
I made you pass through this terrific experience to make you learn that God resides everywhere, in all things ugly or beautiful.

Let this ugly image remain in the temple. He will reside with another beautiful image in this temple. (30)



The next moment, the sculptor revealed himself as Lord Jagannath and merged in the image. (31)

O Lord Jagannatha! Forgive my ignorance and bless me.



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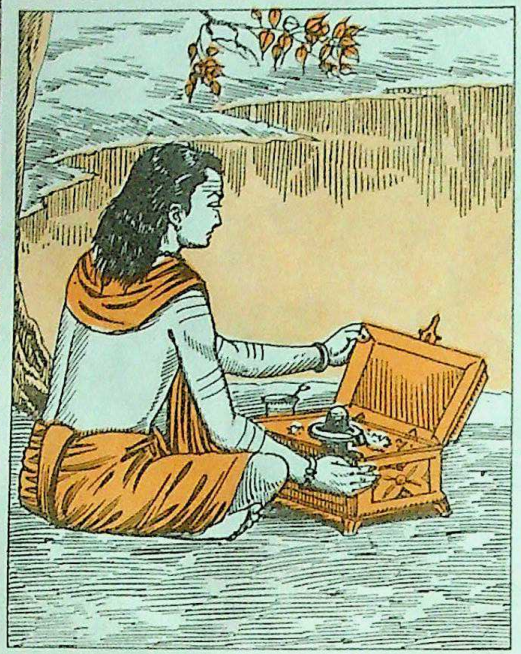
LORD MURUGA SAVES HIS DEVOTEE

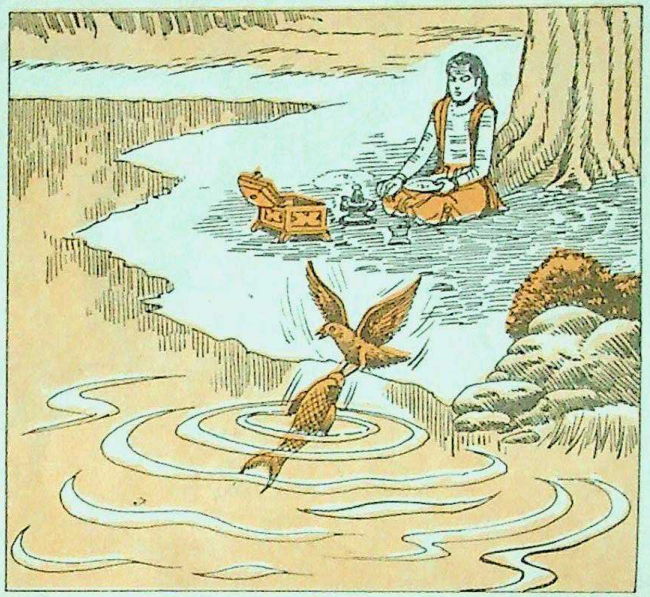
Tamil Original: Siam
English: Raghaveshananda
Art: Sankar

A horse-faced demoness called Gargimukhi lived in a cave near Thirupparamkundram near Madurai. If any one committed any mistake while performing the worship of Lord Shiva, she would keep him captive in her cave. 999 devotees were thus held inside the cave. She was waiting for one more so that she could kill a full thousand at one stroke as sacrifice to Goddess Kali. (1)

Nakkiran was a great devotee of Lord Shiva. One day, he bathed in the river and began his worship under a tree. (2)



At that time, due to a strong gale, leaves from the tree began to fall.
A leaf which fell into the river turned into a fish and another on the bank into a bird. The fish started dragging the bird in to the water. The bird too tried to pull the fish out. Nakkiran stopped his worship and was gazing at this strange phenomenon. (3)



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It was a magic played by the demoness to take him captive. (4)

Your mind was distracted while performing the worship, was it not? (5)

She put him in the cave along with the other 999 captives and bragged..... (6)

Now I have a 1000 captives let me go and bathe in the river. (7)

All the other captives bewailed their fate. (8)

Stop crying! Tell me what has happened. (9)

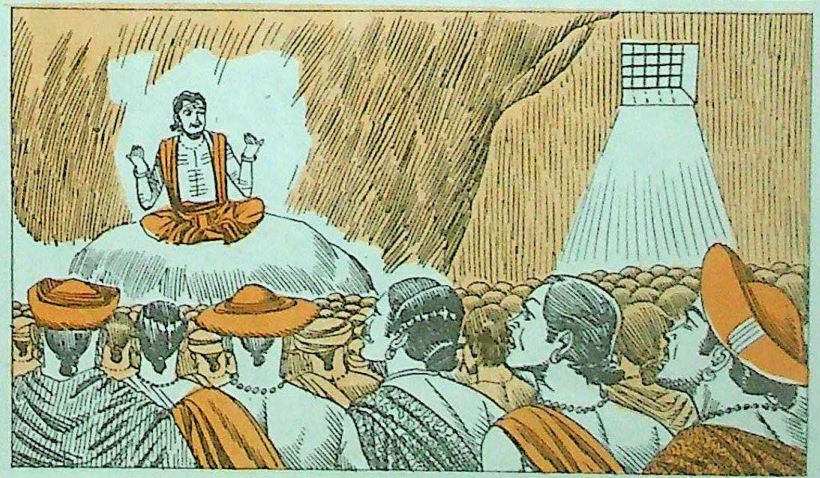
Sinner! Because of you, we too shall be sacrificed. (10)

The fearless Nakkiran heard all the details from them. (11)

Oh! You are afraid that she will sacrifice us to Mother Kali. (12)

Yes, after her bath, she will kill us. What can you do? (13)

In this dangerous situation, Nakkiran started singing the glories of Lord Muruga. (14)



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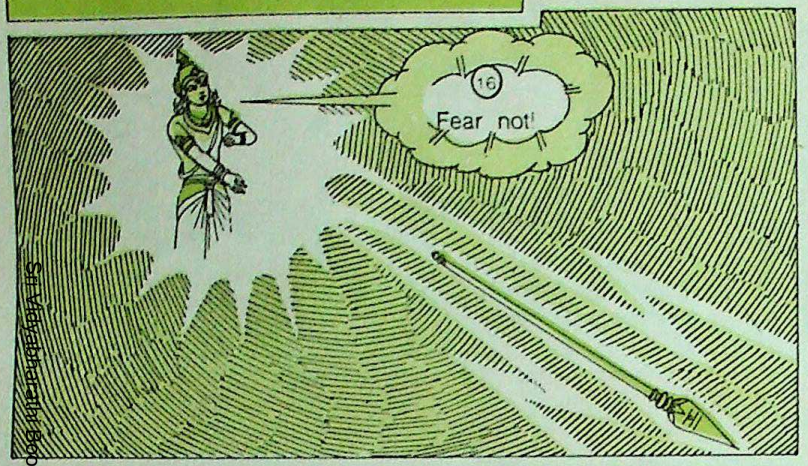
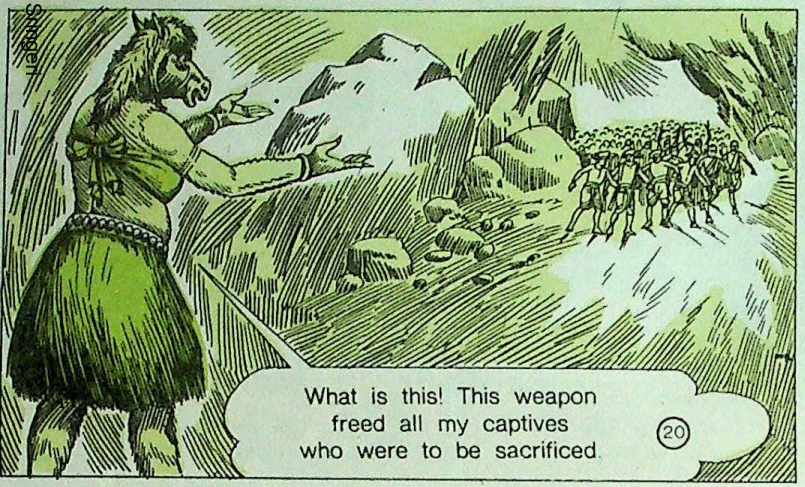
God is the protector of the devotees. When thus called with devotion, He decided to rescue Nakkiran and the other captives. (15)



His weapon, the lance came like a thunderbolt and broke open the cave. Thus all the captives were freed. (17)

How gracious You are! Your weapon has protected earlier several devotees and now it has saved us. (18)

The demoness was shocked at this. (19)



What is this! This weapon freed all my captives who were to be sacrificed. (20)

As soon as she thought so, the weapon pierced her heart, and she died on the spot. (21)

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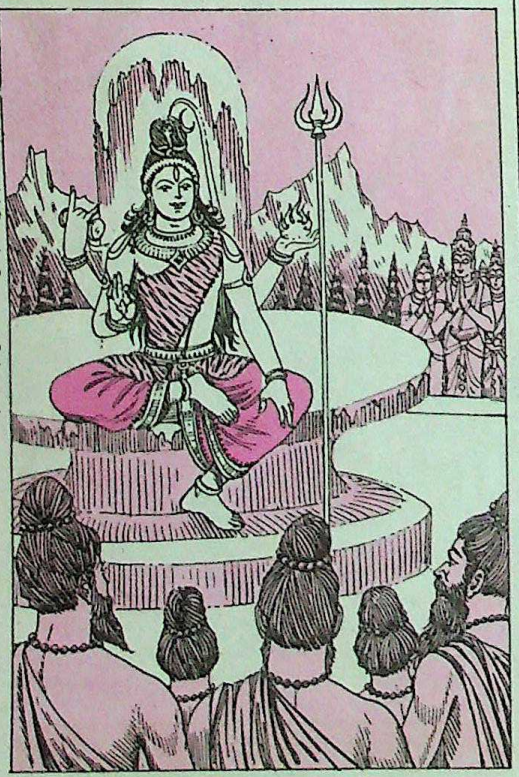
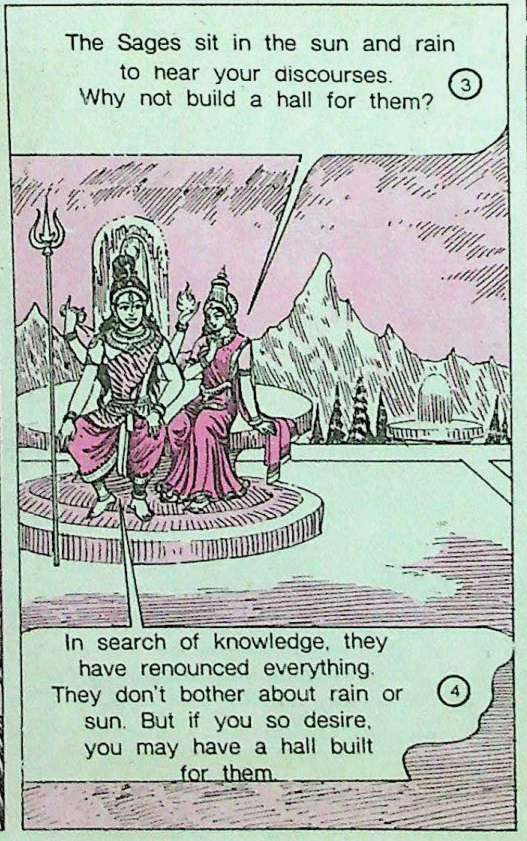
THE IRREVOCABLE DESTINY

Tamil Original: S. Krishnamurthy
English: Raghaveshananda
Art: R.V.

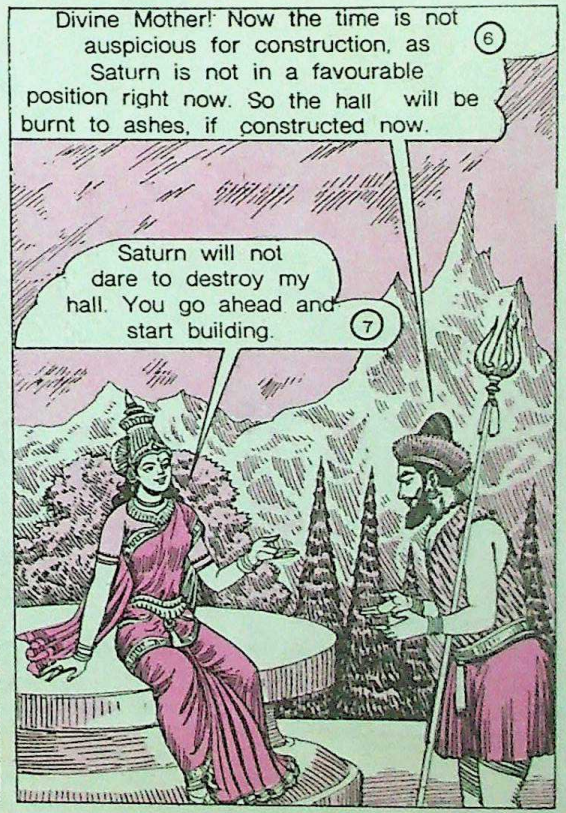
Lord Shiva was giving spiritual advice to Gods and Sages at Kailas. (1)



(2) When Shiva and Parvati were alone..... .



After all, She is mother. She ordered a hall to be built. (5)



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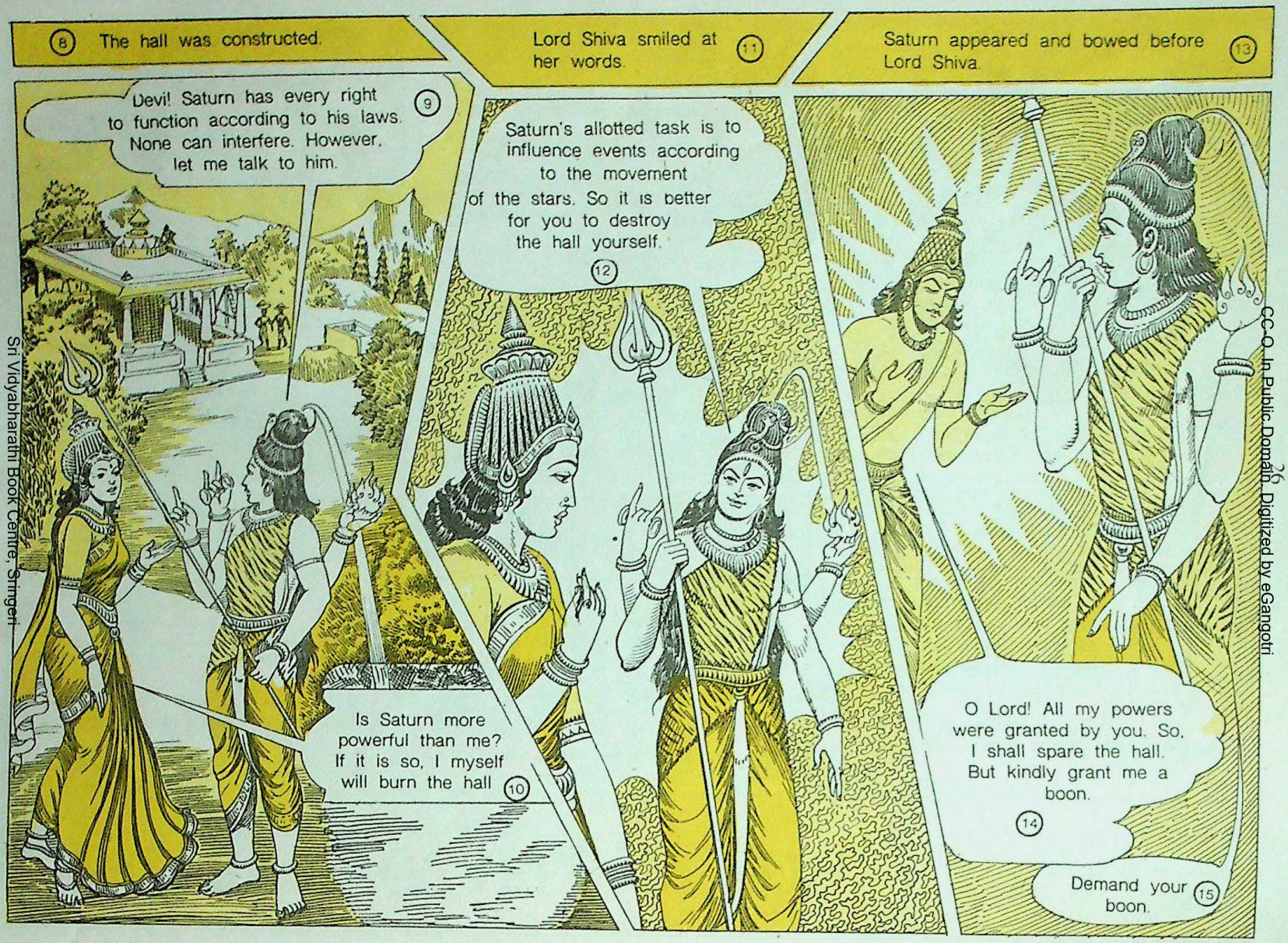

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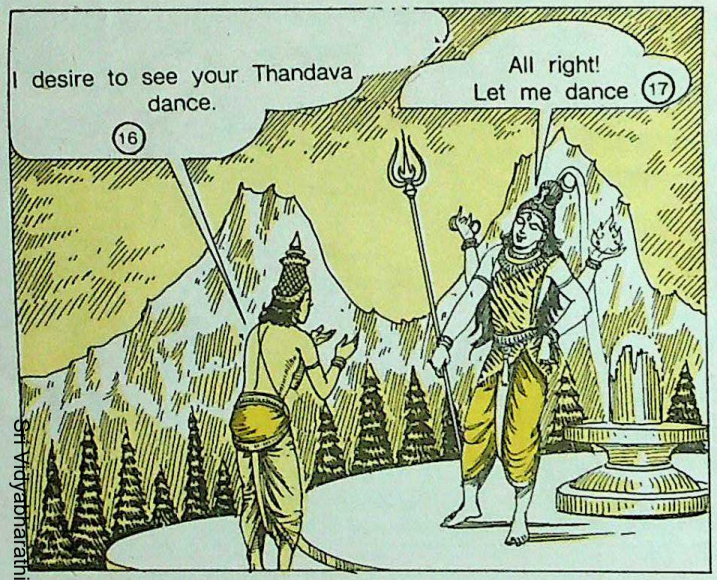
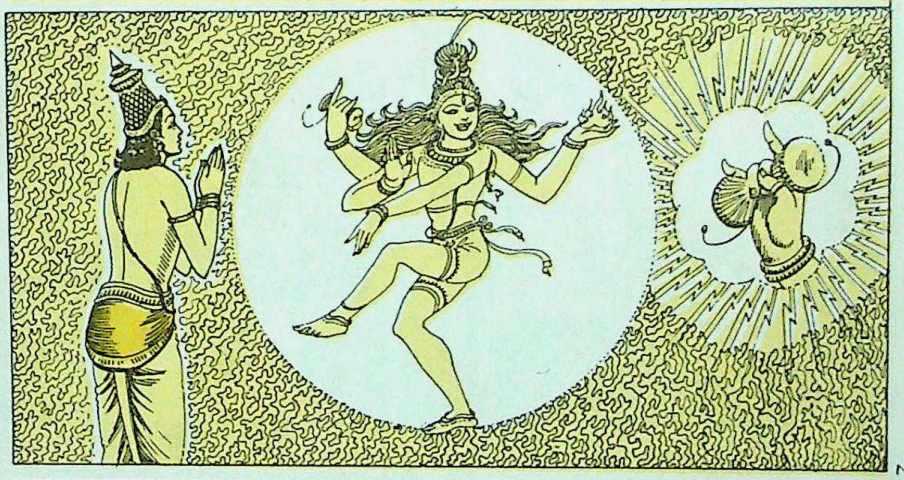
I desire to see your Thandava dance. (16)

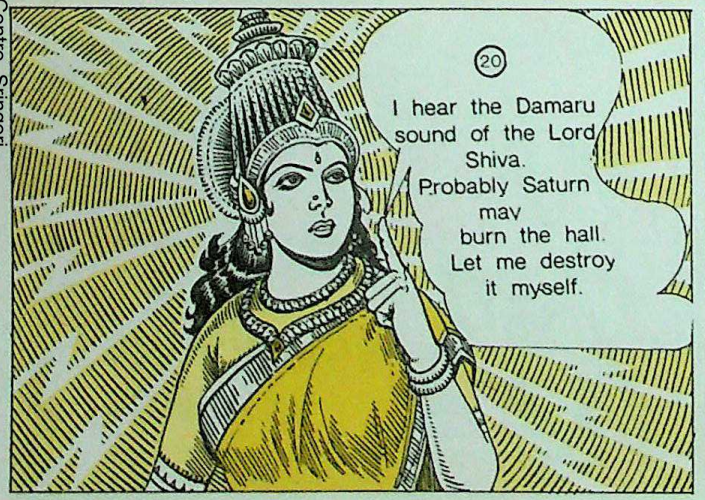
All right! Let me dance (17)



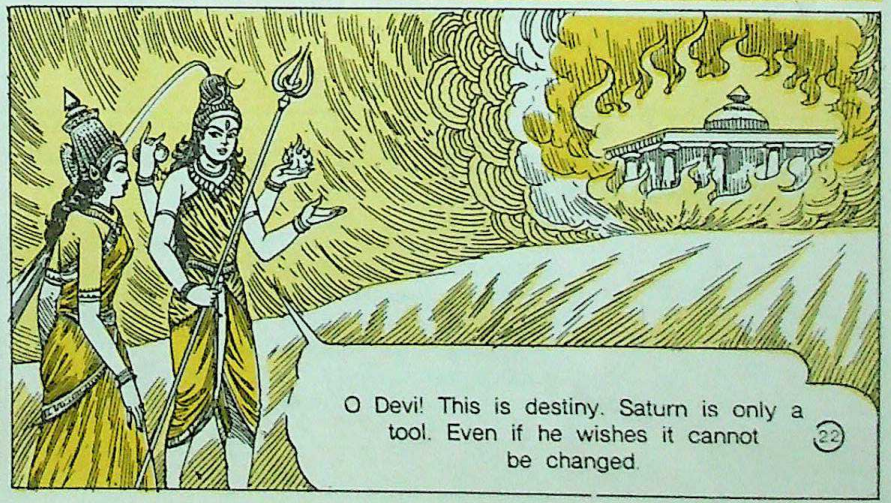
(18) Lord Shiva danced in ecstasy playing with one hand his Damaru and producing melodious sounds. Saturn felt extremely happy.



(19) Parvati at Kailas.



(21) Parvati destroyed the hall. Lord Shiva came to the place.



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BHAKTA KANAKADASA

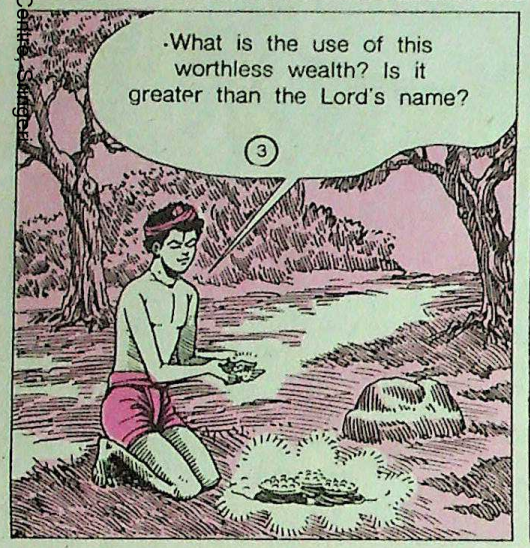
Tamil Original: Syam
English: Raghaveshananda
Art: Sankar

Kanakadasa was not only a great devotee but also a great poet. Even today, his devotional songs are sung in Karnataka. Being an orphan boy, he roamed here and there incessantly thinking of God. He was born in a hunter's family. He lived at Pada, a village in Dharvad district in Karnataka.

1

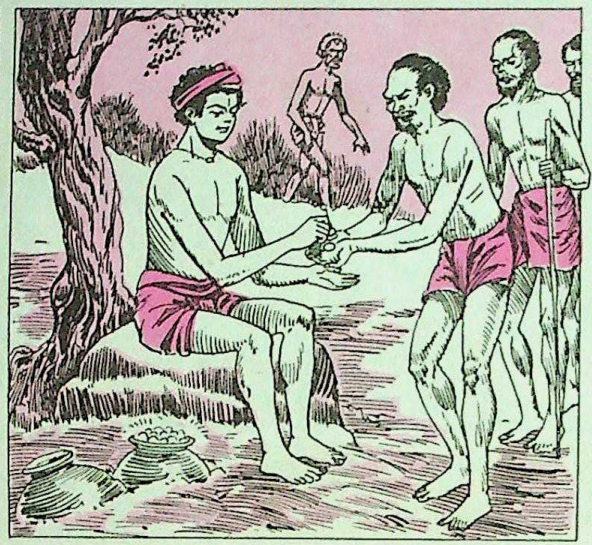
One day, when he was walking, he stumbled over a stone. He removed the stone and found to his amazement a treasure hidden under it.

2



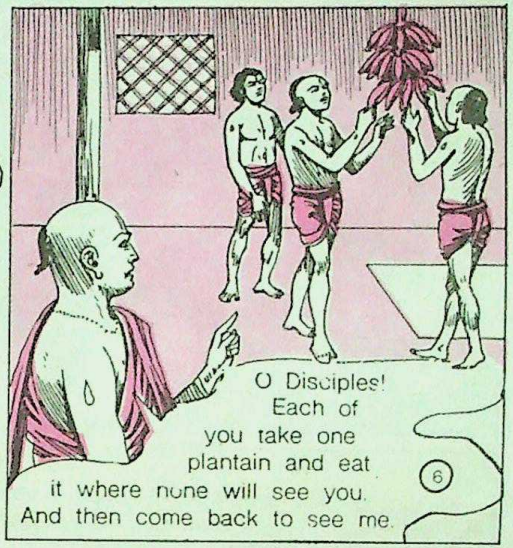
People struggle to acquire wealth in this world. But to him it was as worthless as mud. He gave away all the gold coins to the needy.

4



He became the disciple of a great guru who was Purandara dasa's contemporary and a disciple of Vyasaraya. One day Kanakadasa's guru called all his disciples and said....

5



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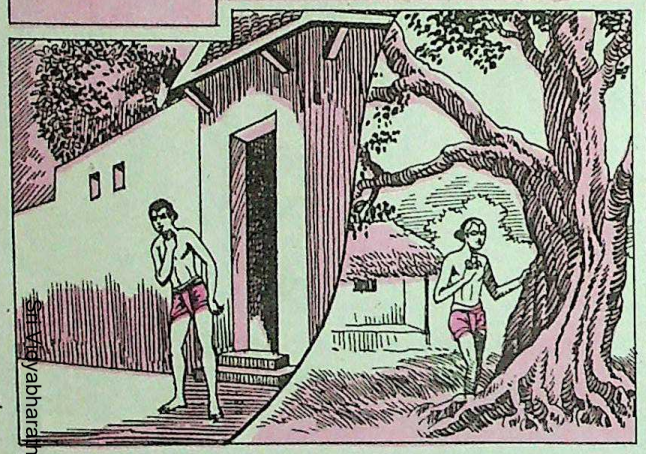
(7) All the disciples except Kanakadasa ate either under a tree, or behind a wall, where none could see them.



(8) When all came back Kanakadasa alone was found having the fruit in his palm.

(9) Why did you not eat the fruit?

What shall I do? I could not find a lonely place. (10)

(11) Why you alone could not find a place where none could see you?

(12) O Sir, wherever I went I felt the presence of God. Since God is everywhere and observing everything, I was not able to eat the fruit unnoticed. There may be a place where there are no men. But there is no place where there is no God

(13) Ah! You are really great. A real devotee always sees God everywhere. Kanaka! May you live long!

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A great festival was celebrated at Sri Krishna's temple at Udupi. The whole temple was decorated. Hundreds of learned men had gathered. Kanakadasa came there singing with devotional fervour with a musical instrument in his hand. (14)

O foolish fellow! How dare you try to enter the temple! Only high caste people can enter inside the temple. Get out! (15)

Govinda, Hari, Govinda! Krishna! Mukunda! Vasudeva! (16)

They were all the more! (17) angry to find him unmoved

One fellow rushed at him angrily. (18)

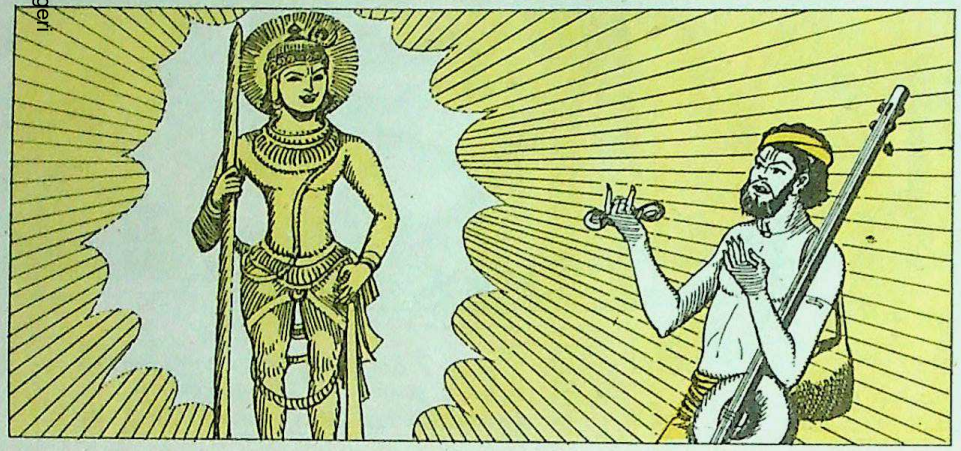
Push him out! He is a stubborn fellow! If he sings in front of houses he may get alms. Why is he polluting this holy place? (19)

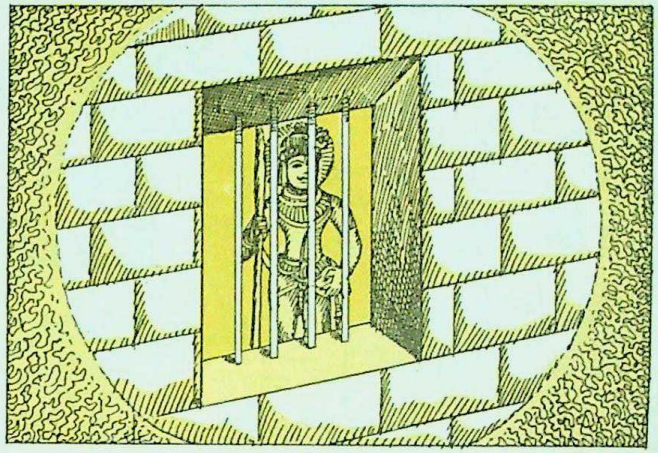
Kanakadasa slowly opened his eyes and understood the situation. Without a word he circumambulated the temple and stood leaning on the back wall of the temple. (20)

Krishna! Madhava! Am I so unfortunate that I should be deprived of your Darshan at your temple! (21)

(22) What a wonder! Immediately, there was a loud sound. The wall behind cracked and gave way. The image of Lord Krishna turned round to face Kanakadasa. Kanakadasa was blessed.

(23) Even today that passage remains. It is named as "Kanaka's Passage". His great composition called "Haribhaktisara" is popular even today





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COMPASSION INCARNATE

Tamil Original: S.R. Thangavelu
English: Raghavesharanda
Art: Azhee

Nearly a hundred years ago, one day, a Tahsildar was travelling in a bullock cart to Vadalur (1)

(2) Oh bullocks! Go fast.

They are slowing down (3) Drive them fast.

After some time.... (4)

At a distance they saw a river. (5)

Let the bullocks drink some water. They are very thirsty. (6)

We shall see to it later. Now go fast.

Again after some time... (7)

The bullocks are too tired, let us rest them under a tree for a while. (8)

We have no time to waste. We should return the same night. We can't rest till we meet the Swamiji. (9)

They finally reached Vadalur where Vallalar was giving a discourse. (10)

The Tahsildar bowed down to Vallalar and sat humbly in front of him. (11)

(12) The cartman took the bullocks to the courtyard of the house. Vallalar was watching them.

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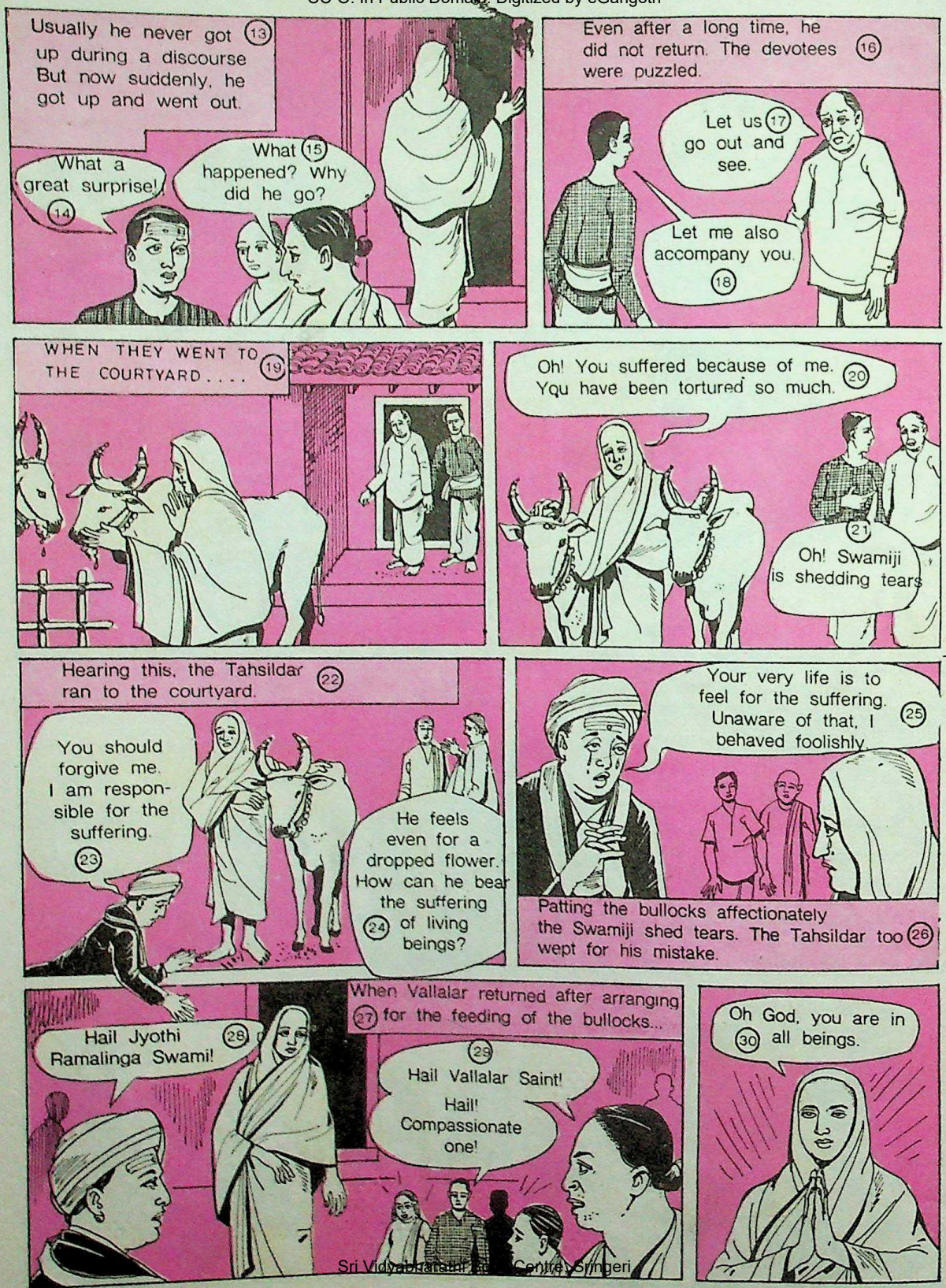

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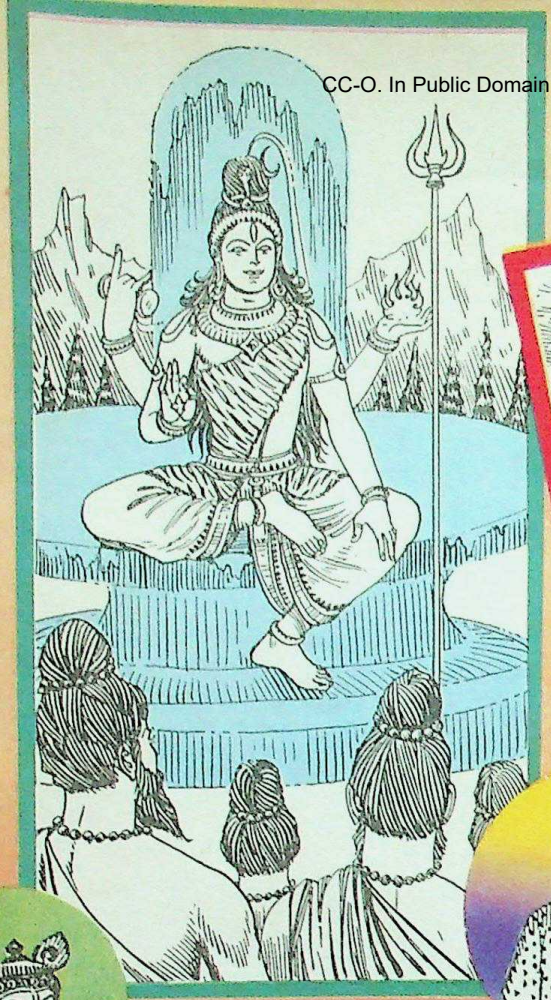

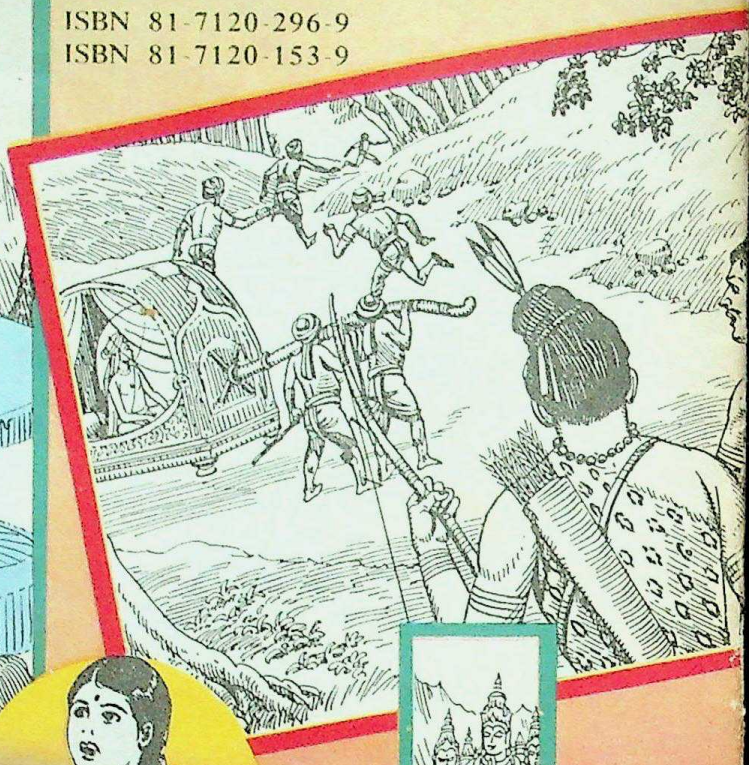

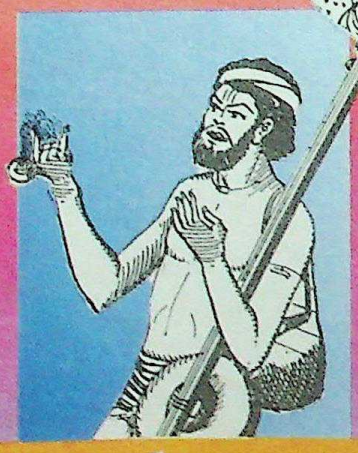

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